

THE ROBBERS

A Play

Friedrich Schiller

What drugs cure not, *iron* will cure;
what iron cures not, *fire* will cure.

—Hippocrates

CHARACTERS

COUNT MAXIMILIAN VON MOOR

KARL }
FRANZ } *his sons*

AMALIA VON EDELREICH, *his niece*

SPIEGELBERG }
SCHWEITZER }
GRIMM }
RATZMANN }
SCHUFTERLE }
ROLLER }
SCHWARZ }
KOSINSKY } *libertines, then bandits*

HERMANN, *bastard son of a nobleman*

DANIEL, *Count Moor's servant*

PASTOR MOSER

A PRIEST

ROBBERS, *and others*

The scene of the action is Germany; the duration about two years.

Act 1

Scene 1

A room in Old Moor's castle in Franconia.

(Franz von Moor, Old Moor.)

FRANZ: But are you sure you are well, Father? You look so pale.

OLD MOOR: Quite well, my boy; what did you have to tell me?

FRANZ: The post has arrived; a letter from our informant in Leipzig—

OLD MOOR (*eagerly*): News of my son Karl?

FRANZ: Hmm! Hmm! Yes, indeed. But I am afraid—I don't know—whether I should—your health—Father, are you really quite well?

OLD MOOR: As fit as a fiddle! Is it about my son, his letter?—why are you so anxious? That is twice you have asked me.

FRANZ: If you are not well—if you have the slightest suspicion that you are not well, then let me—I will tell you at some more appropriate moment. (*half-aside*) This is no news for a delicate constitution.

OLD MOOR: God in heaven, what can it be?

FRANZ: Let me first turn aside and shed a tear of pity for my lost brother—I ought to hold my peace forever, for he is your son; I ought to conceal his disgrace forever, for he is my brother. But to obey you is my first, sad duty; and so forgive me.

OLD MOOR: Oh, Karl, Karl! If only you knew how your wild ways torture your old father's heart; if only you knew, how a single piece of good news of you would add ten years to my life—would make me young again; while now, ah, every word brings me a step nearer the grave!

FRANZ: If that is so, old man, then good-bye—this very day we should all be tearing out our hair over your coffin.

OLD MOOR: Wait! It is only one single short step more—let him have his own way. (*Sitting down*) The sins of the father are visited upon the third and the fourth generations—let it be accomplished.

FRANZ (*taking the letter from his pocket*): You know our informant. Look! I would give the finger of my right hand to be able to say he was a liar, a black and venomous liar.—Brace yourself! Forgive me if I do not give you the letter to read for yourself—you should not yet hear it in its entirety.

OLD MOOR: Everything, everything—my son, you will spare me the need for crutches.*

FRANZ (*reading*): “Leipzig, May 1st.—If it were not that the most solemn promise binds me not to conceal the slightest piece of information I can come by regarding the fate of your brother, then, my dear friend, never should my innocent pen have exercised such tyranny over you. From a hundred of your letters I can tell how news of this kind must pierce a brother’s heart like a dagger; it is as if I could see the worthless wretch—”

(*Old Moor covers his face*)

Father, look! it is only the mildest parts I am reading—“see the wretch already costing you a thousand bitter tears”—ah, they flowed, they poured streaming down my cheeks in pity—“it is as if I could see your good old father, deathly pale already”—Dear God! and so you are, already, before you have heard anything at all?

OLD MOOR: Go on! Go on!

FRANZ:—“deathly pale already, reeling in his chair, and cursing the day those childish lips first framed the name ‘Father’.” I could not find out everything, and of the little that I know it is only a little that I tell. Your brother, it seems, has run the whole gamut of infamy; I, at any rate, know nothing worse than the things he has done, though his imagination may well surpass the bounds of mine. Last night at midnight he made a grand resolution—since he had run up debts of forty thousand ducats—a pretty sum, Father—“and as he had robbed a rich banker’s daughter here in town of her honor, and fatally wounded her fiancé, a fine young fellow of good birth, in a duel—to flee with seven others whom he had depraved like himself and escape the arm of the law”—Father! In heaven’s name, Father! What is the matter?

*That is, Old Moor will not need crutches if bad news causes his premature death.

OLD MOOR: It is enough! Stop, my son!

FRANZ: I will spare you—"he has been declared a wanted man, his victims are crying out for satisfaction, a price has been put on his head—the name of Moor"—no! my miserable lips shall never be my father's murderers! (*tearing up the letter*) Do not believe it, Father! Do not believe one syllable he writes!

OLD MOOR (*weeping bitterly*): My name! my honorable name!

FRANZ (*throwing his arms round his neck*): Shameful, thrice shameful Karl! Did I not suspect it, when he was still a boy, and was always following after girls, chasing up hill and down dale with street urchins and ruffians, shunning the sight of the church as a miscreant shuns the jail, and tossing the pennies he had wheedled from you to the first beggar he met, while we sat at home improving our minds with prayer and by reading pious sermons? Did I not suspect it, when he would rather read the adventures of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great and other such benighted heathens than the story of the penitent Tobias?* A hundred times I prophesied to you—for my love for him always kept the limits set by a son's duty to his father—the boy will yet bring shame and misery upon us all! Oh, that he did not bear the name of Moor! that my heart did not beat so warmly for him! The sinful love for him that I cannot suppress will one day bear witness against me before the judgment seat of God.

OLD MOOR: Ah—my hopes, my golden dreams!

FRANZ: I know; that is what I was saying. The fiery spirit that burns in the lad, so you always said, that makes him yearn so keenly for every kind of beauty and grandeur; the frankness that mirrors his soul in his eyes, the tender feeling that melts him to tears of sympathy at any sight of suffering, the manly courage that sends him climbing hundred-year-old oak trees and leaping ditches and fences and foaming rivers; the youthful ambition, the implacable constancy; all these shining virtues that took root in his father's favorite son, one day will make him a friend's true friend, a model citizen, a hero, a great, great man—and now, Father, look! the fiery spirit has grown, has burgeoned, has brought forth glorious fruit. See how this frankness has so neatly turned to insolence, see how this tenderness coos for any coquette, so readily yields to the

*Tobias, or Tobit, of the Apocrypha, the pious Jew in exile who never loses faith in divine providence and eventually enjoys a happy family reunion and a peaceful death.

seduction of a Phryne!* See how this fiery genius has burnt up the oil of its life in six short years, to the last drop, so that to his very face people can say “Voilà, c’est l’amour qui a fait ça!†” No, just look at this bold imagination, just look at the plans it makes and carries out, so that the heroic deeds of a Cartouche or a Howard‡ pale into insignificance beside them! And only let these magnificent beginnings grow to full maturity—for after all, who can expect perfection at such a tender age? Perhaps, Father, you will live to see the glorious day when he is the commander of an army, ensconced in the stillness of the forests, ready to ease the weary wanderer’s journey by taking half his burden from him—perhaps before you are laid to rest you will be able to visit his monument, that he will have erected for him between heaven and earth—perhaps, oh Father, Father, Father—find yourself another name, or shopkeepers and street urchins will point their fingers at you, for they will have seen your fine son’s portrait at the market place in Leipzig.

OLD MOOR: And you too, my Franz, you too? Oh, my children! How they pierce my heart!

FRANZ: You see, I have my wits about me too; but my wit is the bite of a scorpion.—And then that everyday dullard, that cold, wooden Franz, and all the other names that the contrast between the two of us so often prompted when he sat on your lap or pinched your cheek—one day he will die within the walls of his own estate and rot and be forgotten, while the fame of this virtuoso flies from pole to pole. Ah! gracious Heaven, see him join his hands in thanks, this dry, cold, wooden Franz—that he is not like him!

OLD MOOR: Forgive me, my son; do not be angry with a father whose expectations have been dashed. The God who sends me tears through Karl will wipe them away, my Franz, by your hand.

FRANZ: Yes, Father, my hand shall wipe them away. Your Franz will make it his life’s work to lengthen your days. Your life shall be the oracle that I will consult above all else in all my doings; the glass in which I shall see all things. No duty shall be too sacred for me to break it in the service of your precious life. Do you believe me?

*Phryne is a famous fourth-century B.C. Greek courtesan.

†There, love did that!

‡L. D. Cartouche (d. 1721) and the fictitious Captain Zachary Howard were notorious highwaymen.

OLD MOOR: You bear a heavy burden of duty, my son—God bless you for what you have been and for what you shall be to me!

FRANZ: But tell me, now—if you did not have to call this son your own, would you be a happy man?

OLD MOOR: Stop!—When the midwife brought him to me, I lifted him up to heaven and cried: am I not a happy man?

FRANZ: So you said. And now do you find it so? You envy the wretchedest of your peasants that he is not this son's father.—Sorrow will be yours as long as you have this son. That grief will grow with Karl. That sorrow will undermine your days.

OLD MOOR: Oh! it has made me like a man of fourscore years.

FRANZ: Why, then—if you were to disown this son of yours?

OLD MOOR (*starting up*): Franz! Franz! What are you saying?

FRANZ: Is it not your love for him that brings you all this grief? Without that love, he exists for you no longer. Without this criminal love, this sinful love, he is dead for you—he was never born to you. Not flesh and blood, the heart makes fathers and sons. Love him no more, and this degenerate is no longer your son, even if he was cut from the flesh of your own body. he was the apple of your eye, but it is written, if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hellfire. Better to enter childless into the kingdom of God, than that Father and Son should be cast into hellfire. It is the word of God!

OLD MOOR: You would have me curse my son?

FRANZ: Not so, not so! It is not your son that I would have you curse. What is he that you call your son? he whom you gave his life, while he spares no effort to shorten yours?

OLD MOOR: Oh, it is true, it is all too true! it is a judgment upon me! The Lord wills it so!

FRANZ: See how the child of your bosom treats its father. Through your father's sympathy he strangles you, murders you through your love, has even stabbed your father's heart to strike the final blow. When once you are no more, he is master of your estates and king of his passions. The dam is broken, and the torrent of his desires can rage freely on. Imagine yourself in his place! How often he must wish them under the earth—his father, his brother, who stand pitiless in the way of his excesses? But is that love for love? Is that filial gratitude for a father's tenderness? When he sacrifices ten years of your life to a moment's lust? when he

gambles the good name of his fathers, unspotted for seven centuries, on the pleasure of a fleeting minute? Is that he whom you call your son? Answer! Do you call that a son?

OLD MOOR: An unloving child! Oh! but still my child! still my child!

FRANZ: A precious, darling child, whose sole pursuit it is not to know it has a father. Oh, if only you would learn to see it as it is! If only the scales would fall from your eyes! But your indulgence can only confirm him in his depravity, your support give it legitimacy. Yes, indeed, you will turn aside the curse from his head; upon you, Father, upon you will the curse of damnation fall.

OLD MOOR: It is just! it is only just! Mine, mine is all the fault!

FRANZ: How many thousands who have drained the cup of pleasure to the dregs have been brought by suffering to see the error of their ways! And does not the bodily pain which accompanies every excess bear the fingerprint of the divine will? Should man by cruel mercifulness turn it aside? Shall a father let go to eternal damnation what is entrusted to him?—Think, Father, if you deliver him up to his misery for a little while, will he not have to mend his ways and learn to be a better man? or else he will remain a scoundrel, even in that great school of misery, and then—woe to the father who flouted the decrees of a higher wisdom by his tenderness!—What then, Father?

OLD MOOR: I will write and say that he no longer has my support.

FRANZ: What you do is just and wise.

OLD MOOR: That he shall not show his face before me.

FRANZ: It will work to his salvation.

OLD MOOR (*tenderly*): Until he mend his ways!

FRANZ: Very well, very well! But if then he should come with the mask of the hypocrite, should gain your pity by his tears and your forgiveness by his flattery, and then the next day should mock your weakness in the arms of his whores? No, Father! He will come of his own accord when his conscience is clear.

OLD MOOR: Then I will write this moment and tell him so.

FRANZ: Stop! just one more word, Father! Your indignation, I fear, might dictate too harsh words for your pen, words that would rend his heart—and then—do you not think he might even take it as a token of forgiveness, that you deign to write to him with your own hand? It will be better to let me write for you.

OLD MOOR: Do so, my son.—Ah! it would have broken my heart! Tell him—

FRANZ (*quickly*): Shall I, then?

OLD MOOR: Tell him that a thousand tears of blood—tell him that a thousand sleepless nights—but do not drive my son to despair.

FRANZ: Should you not go to bed, Father? It was hard for you to bear.

OLD MOOR: Tell him that his father's bosom—I tell you, do not drive my son to despair. (*exit, sadly*)

FRANZ (*watching him go, and laughing*): Console yourself, old man, you will never clasp him to that bosom; the path to your bosom is as firmly barricaded to him, as heaven is to hell.—He was torn from your arms before you knew that you could want so—I should be a poor hand at it if I could not manage to pry a son from his father's heart, even if he were bound to it with fetters of brass—I have drawn a magic circle of curses about you that he will not be able to cross.—Good luck, Franz! The favorite is gone; things are looking brighter. I must pick up all these pieces of paper—someone might easily recognize my hand—(*collecting the torn pieces of the letter*) And the old man's grief will soon put an end to him; and *she*—I must drive her precious Karl from her thoughts too, even if half her life should depend on him. I have every right to be resentful of nature; and by my honor, I will make my rights known! Why was I not the first to creep out of our mother's womb? Why not the only one? Why did nature burden me with this ugliness? why me? Just as if she had been bankrupt when I was born. Why should I have this Laplander's nose? Why should I have these blackamoor's lips, these Hottentot's eyes? I truly think she made a heap of the most hideous parts of every human kind as the ingredients for me. Death and damnation! Who gave her the power to make him like that, and to keep it from me? Could anyone pay court to her before he came along? Or offend her, before he existed? Why was she so partial about her own creation? No, no! I do her an injustice. After all, she gave us the gift of ingenuity too when she set us naked and miserable upon the shores of this great ocean of the world: swim whoever can, and let sink whoever is too clumsy! She gave me nothing; what I can make of myself is up to me. Each man has the same right to the greatest and the least; claim destroys claim, impulse destroys impulse, force destroys force. Might is right, and the limits of our strength our only law. It is true, there are certain conventions men have made to rule the pulses that turn the world. Honorable reputation! A valuable coin indeed, one to drive a fine

bargain with for the man who knows how to use it. Conscience—yes, indeed! an excellent scarecrow to keep the sparrows from the cherry trees! and a well-written check to help the bankrupt, too, at the last moment. Yes indeed, most admirable devices to keep fools respectful and to hold down the mob, so that clever people can live in better comfort. It must be admitted, most ingenious devices! They remind me of the hedges my peasants plant so cunningly around their fields so that the rabbits cannot jump over—no, not on your life, not one single rabbit!—but their lord and master sets spur to his horse and gallops freely over the crops. Poor little rabbit! It's a sad part to play, to be a rabbit in this world! But your lord and master needs his rabbits! So, away we go! Fear nothing, and you are as powerful as if all fear you. It is the fashion nowadays to lace one's breeches so that one can wear them tight or loose as one pleases. We will have ourselves a conscience made in the latest style, so that we can let it out nicely as we grow. How can we help it? Go to the tailor! I have heard a great deal of idle talk about something called love of one's kin, enough to turn a sound man's head.—He is your brother! which, being interpreted, is: he was baked in the same oven that you were; so let him be sacred to you!—Just consider this extraordinary conclusion, this ridiculous argument from the proximity of bodies to the harmony of minds; from the identity of domicile to the identity of feeling; from the uniformity of diet to the uniformity of inclination. But there is more to it—he is your father! He gave you life, you are his flesh and blood; so let him be sacred to you! Another cunning conclusion! I should like to know *why* he made me? Not out of love for me, surely, since there was no *me* to love. Did he know me before he made me? Or did he think of me while he was making me? Or did he wish for me as he was making me? Did he know what I should be like? I hope not, or I should want to punish him for making me regardless! Can I feel any gratitude to him for my being a man? No more than I could grudge it him if he had made me a woman. Can I acknowledge any love that does not rest on respect for my person? Could respect for my person exist, when my person could only come into being through that for which it must be the condition? And what is so sacred about it all? The act itself through which I was created? As if that were anything but the animal gratification of animal desires? Or the result of that act, when that is nothing but brute necessity that one

would gladly be rid of if one could, if it were not at the cost of flesh and blood. Am I to speak well of him for loving me? That is vanity, the professional sin of all artists, who fancy their own work, however ugly it may be.—There it is then, the witchcraft that they veil in clouds of holy incense to abuse our fearful nature. Am I, too, to let myself be led along by it, like a little boy? Very well, then! courage, and to work! I will crush everything that stands in the way of my becoming master. And master I must be, to force my way to goals that I shall never gain by kindness. (*exit*)

Scene 2

A tavern on the borders of Saxony.

(Karl von Moor *deep in a book*, Spiegelberg *drinking at the table*)

MOOR (*laying the book aside*): I hate this age of scribblers, when I can pick up my Plutarch and read of great men.

SPIEGELBERG (*puts a glass before him. Drinking*): Josephus* is the man you should read.

MOOR: The bright spark of Promethean fire is burnt out. All we have now is a flash of witch meal†—stage lightning, not flame enough to light a pipe of tobacco. Here we scratch about like rats at Hercules' club, and addle our miserable brains with speculation over what he had between his legs. A French cleric proclaims that Alexander was a coward, a consumptive professor with a bottle of smelling-salts under his nose gives lectures on energy. Fellows who faint when they have had a girl write commentaries on the tactics of Hannibal—boys still wet behind the ears crib their proses from Livy on the battle of Cannae, and snivel over Scipio's victories because they have to describe them.

SPIEGELBERG: Said in true Alexandrine style.

MOOR: A fine reward for your valor on the battlefield, to live on in the grammar school and be dragged around immortal in a schoolboy's satchel. A worthy repayment for the blood you shed, to be wrapped round buns by a Nuremberg confectioner, or if

*Flavius Josephus, Jewish historian and general of the first century A.D.

†Witch meal is lycopodium powder, made from the spores of club mosses and used on the stage to produce flashes of fire.

you're lucky to be hoisted onto stilts by a French tragedian and pulled about like puppets on a string! Haha!

SPIEGELBERG (*drinking*): I tell you, you should read Josephus.

MOOR: Pah! An age of eunuchs, fit for nothing but chewing over the deeds of bygone days, mutilating the heroes of old with their learned interpretations and mocking them with their tragedies. The strength of their loins is dried up, and the dregs of a beer barrel must help to propagate mankind.

SPIEGELBERG: Tea, brother, tea!

MOOR: There they go, smothering healthy nature with their ridiculous conventions. Haven't the courage to drain a glass, because they would have to wish "Good health!" Fawn on the man who polishes His Highness's boots, and make life a misery for the wretch they have no need to fear. Praise each other to the skies for the sake of a dinner, and would gladly poison each other when they lose a bedstead at an auction. Damn the Sadducee who doesn't show himself enough in church, and reckon up their filthy lucre at the altar; fall on their knees so that they can show off their coattails the better; don't take their eye off the preacher, so as not to miss the cut of his wig.—Fall in a faint if they see a goose bleeding and clap their hands when their rival goes bankrupt—No, however much I pleaded—"Just one more day!"—no! to jail with him, the dog!—Pleas! Oaths! Tears! (*Stamping his foot*) Hell and damnation!

SPIEGELBERG: And all for a few thousand miserable ducats—

MOOR: No, I'll not think of it. I am supposed to lace my body in a corset and straitjacket my will with laws. The law has cramped the flight of eagles to a snail's pace. The law never yet made a great man, but freedom will breed a giant, a colossus. They ensconce themselves in a tyrant's belly, humor every whim of his digestion, and draw in their breath when his guts rumble.—Oh, if only Arminius's* spirit still glowed in the ashes!—Give me an army of fellows like me to command, and I'll turn Germany into a republic that will make Rome and Sparta look like nunneries. (*tosses his sword onto the table and stands up*)

SPIEGELBERG (*jumping up*): Bravo! bravissimo! just what I wanted to talk to you about! Look, Moor, I'll tell you something I've been

*Arminius, or Hermann, chief of the Cheruskans, is credited with deterring the Roman legions under Varus and thereby preventing the Roman Empire from expanding east of the Rhine.

thinking about for a long time, you're just the man for it—drink up, have another—suppose we all turned Jews, and started talking about the Kingdom again?

MOOR (*laughing out loud*): Ha! I see, I see! You want to put foreskins out of fashion, because the barber has had yours already?

SPIEGELBERG: You clown! It is true, I do happen, strangely enough, to be circumcised in advance. But look, isn't it a brave and cunning plan? We'll send out a manifesto to all the corners of the world and summon everyone who won't eat pork to Palestine. I shall have authentic documents to prove that Herod the Tetrarch was my great-great-grandfather, and so on. Man, what a jubilation, when they find their feet again, and can build Jerusalem anew. Then clear the Turks out of Asia while the iron is still hot, cut down the cedars of Lebanon, build ships, and flog ribbons and old tat to all the nations. And then—

MOOR (*smiling, and taking him by the hand*): Now, friend! No more pranks of that kind.

SPIEGELBERG (*taken aback*): Bah, you're not going to play the prodigal son now, are you? A fellow like you, who has written enough on faces with his sword to fill three attorneys' books in a leap year? Do you want me to tell the tale of the dog's funeral? What? I shall have to remind you of your own doings; that will put a spark into you again, if nothing else can stir you up. Do you remember? Those fellows on the council had had your mastiff's leg shot off, and to pay them back, you proclaimed a fast in the whole town. People grumbled about it. But you lost no time, bought up all the meat in Leipzig, so that in eight hours there wasn't a bone left to gnaw in the whole place, and the price of fish began to rise. The town council and the worthies were plotting revenge. Seventeen hundred of us lads out on the streets, and you leading us, and butchers and tailors and grocers following, and publicans and barbers and all the tradesmen, and swore they would wreck the town if anyone touched a hair on our heads. So it went like the shooting at Hornberg* and they went off with their tails between their legs. You sent for a whole panel of doctors, and offered three ducats to the one who would write a prescription for the dog. We thought the gentlemen would think

*At the proverbial "shooting at Hornberg" there was in fact no shooting at all, because the opponents lacked the courage to fight.

it beneath their dignity and say no, and had already agreed we were going to force them to do it. But that wasn't necessary; they fought for the three ducats, even when it was knocked down to threepence, they wrote a dozen prescriptions in the hour, and that soon finished the brute off.

MOOR: Miserable creatures!

SPIEGELBERG: The funeral was arranged with all pomp and ceremony, there were odes in honor of the departed dog, and we went out at night, nearly a thousand of us, a lantern in one hand and sword in the other, and so on through the town with bells and music till we had buried the dog. Then we stuffed ourselves with food till it was broad daylight, and you thanked the gentlemen for their heartfelt sympathy and sold all the meat at half price. *Mort de ma vie!** They respected us then, like a garrison in a conquered fortress—

MOOR: And you are not ashamed to boast of such a thing? Haven't even shame enough to be ashamed of playing such tricks?

SPIEGELBERG: Go, go! I don't recognize Moor any longer. Don't you remember how you have railed a thousand times against the old skinflint, and said: let him pinch and scrape, so that you could swill to your heart's content! Don't you remember? eh? don't you remember? Oh, you Godforsaken coxcomb, that was spoken like a man, like a man of breeding, but now—

MOOR: Curse you for reminding me of it! Curse myself for saying it! But it was only in the heat of the wine, and my heart knew not the vain things my tongue spoke.

SPIEGELBERG (*shaking his head*): No, no, no! it cannot be! No, Brother, you can never be in earnest. My dear fellow, is it hardship that makes you so downcast? Come, let me tell you one of my exploits when I was a lad. There beside my house was a ditch, eight feet wide at least, and we lads used to have contests, trying to jump across it. But it was no good. Flop! there you lay, and they hissed and laughed at you, and threw snowballs at you, one after the other. Next door to our house a ranger kept his dog on a chain, a bad-tempered brute that used to bite, it would catch the girls by the skirt in no time if they didn't look out and went a shade too close. It was the best thing I knew to tease that dog whenever I could, and I would laugh till I was half-dead to see the

*Literally, "death of my life!"

creature glowering so and longing to take a jump at me, if it could only get free. What happened? Another time I was giving it my usual treatment, and threw a stone and hit it so hard in the ribs that it broke the chain, it was so furious, and was at me, and I was off and away like greased lightning. But hell's bells! there was the damned ditch in my way. What then? The dog at my heels, mad with rage, so never say die, a quick run up and—over I go. That jump saved my skin; the brute would have torn me to pieces.

MOOR: But why are you telling me this?

SPIEGELBERG: Why, to make you see—that necessity brings out the best in us! That's why I shan't be afraid if it comes to the worst. Danger fortifies our courage; our strength grows in adversity. Fate must intend to make a great man of me, since it crosses me so often.

MOOR (*irritated*): What should we need courage for, that we have not dared already?

SPIEGELBERG: What? So you will let your talents molder? Hide your light under a bushel? Do you really think your tomfooleries in Leipzig exhaust the range of human wit? Just wait till we have seen the wide world! Paris and London!—where you earn a box on the ears for calling anyone an honest man. It's a sight for sore eyes to see business done on the grand scale!—You'll stare! Your eyes will pop out! How to forge a signature—how to load dice—how to pick a lock—how to pour out the insides of a safe—just wait, and Spiegelberg will show you! The first gallows we come to, for the milksop who will rather go hungry than get his fingers dirty.

MOOR (*absently*): What? You have done all that, and more, I suppose?

SPIEGELBERG: I do believe you don't trust me. Just wait, let me really get warmed up; you shall have the surprise of your life, your brain will turn somersaults in your head, when my wits are delivered of their progeny. (*standing up, heatedly*) Why, I see it all now! Great thoughts are taking shape in my soul! Mighty plans are fermenting in my ingenious mind! Curse me for sleeping! (*striking his forehead*) for letting my energies lie fettered, my prospects barred and thwarted; I am awake, I feel what I am—what I must and shall be!

MOOR: You are a fool. The wine has gone to your head.

SPIEGELBERG (*in greater excitement*): Spiegelberg, they will say, are

you a magician, Spiegelberg? What a pity you did not become a general, Spiegelberg, the king will say, you would have beaten the Austrians into a cocked hat. Yes, I can hear the doctors complaining, it is wicked that he didn't take up medicine, he would have discovered a new powder for the goiter. Ah! and that he didn't study economics, the Sullys* will sigh in their treasuries, he would have conjured louis d'or from stones. And Spiegelberg will be the name, in east and west, and into the mud with you, cowards and toads, as Spiegelberg spreads his wings and flies high into the temple of fame.

MOOR: Good fortune to you! Climb up on pillars of shame to the summits of glory. In the shady groves of my father's home, in my Amalia's arms, a nobler pleasure waits for me. A week ago and more I wrote to my father begging his forgiveness. I did not conceal the slightest detail from him, and where there is honesty, there too is compassion and a helping hand. Let us say good-bye, Moritz. We shall see no more of each other after today. The post has arrived. My father's forgiveness is already within the walls of this town.

(Enter Schweitzer, Grimm, Roller, Schufterle, Ratzmann.)

ROLLER: Do you know they are looking for us already?

GRIMM: That we are not safe from arrest at any moment?

MOOR: I am not surprised. Let it be as it will! Didn't you see Schwarz? Didn't he say anything about a letter he had for me?

ROLLER: He has been looking for you for a long time; I think it's something of the kind.

MOOR: Where is he, where, where? (*making as if to hurry away*)

ROLLER: Don't go! We told him to come here. You are shaking?

MOOR: I am not shaking. Why should I be shaking? Comrades! that letter—rejoice with me! I am the happiest man on earth, why should I tremble?

(Enter SCHWARZ)

MOOR (*rushing to meet him*): Brother! Brother! the letter, the letter!

SCHWARZ (*giving him the letter, which he hurriedly opens*): What is it? You are as white as a sheet!

MOOR: My brother's hand!

SCHWARZ: What is the matter with Spiegelberg?

*Maximilien de Béthune, duc de Sully (1560–1641), the advisor to Henry IV who restored French prosperity and left a surplus in the treasury.

GRIMM: The fellow is crazy. He looks as though he has caught Saint Vitus's dance.

SCHUFTERLE: He must be out of his mind. I think he is composing verses.

RATZMANN: Spiegelberg! Hey, Spiegelberg!—The brute won't listen.

GRIMM (*shaking him*): Man, are you dreaming, or—?

SPIEGELBERG (*who has all the while been miming a mountebank's act in the corner of the room, jumping up wildly*): *La bourse ou la vie!**

(*He seizes Schweitzer by the throat; Schweitzer calmly pushes him back against the wall. Moor drops the letter on the ground and runs out. All start back*)

ROLLER (*after him*): Moor! Where are you going, Moor? What are you doing?

GRIMM: What's the matter, what's the matter? He's as pale as a corpse!

SCHWEITZER: Fine news that must be! Let's see!

ROLLER (*picks up the letter, and reads*): "Unfortunate brother!"

That's a jolly way to begin. "I am obliged to tell you in brief that your hopes are in vain; Father asks me to tell you that you are to go wherever your disgraceful deeds may take you. He also says that you are to entertain no hope of ever weeping your way to forgiveness at his feet, unless you are prepared to live on bread and water in the deepest of his dungeons, till your hairs are grown like eagles' feathers, and your nails like birds' claws. These are his very words. He commands me to write no more. Farewell forever! I pity you—Franz von Moor."

SCHWEITZER: A sweet, charming brother! Indeed, Franz is the creature's name?

SPIEGELBERG (*creeping up quietly*): Bread and water, do I hear?

That's a fine life! But I have made other plans for you! Didn't I say I should have to think for you all one day?

SCHWEITZER: What's the sheep's head saying? That jackass wants to think for us all?

SPIEGELBERG: Cowards, cripples, lame dogs is what you are, all of you, if you have not the courage for a great venture!

ROLLER: Well, that's true, so we should be; but is it going to get us out of this damned fix, your great venture? Is it?

*Your money or your life!

SPIEGELBERG (*laughing contemptuously*): You poor fool! Get you out of this fix? Ha, ha! Out of this fix? Is that all your thimbleful of brain can think of? Is that enough to see your horses home? Spiegelberg would be a rogue if that was all he had in mind. Heroes, I tell you, lords, princes, gods it will make of you!

RATZMANN: That's enough at one blow, to be sure! But it will be a breakneck job, it will cost us our heads at least.

SPIEGELBERG: It will cost nothing but courage, for I will supply what wits are needed. Courage, I say, Schweitzer! Courage, Roller, Grimm, Ratzmann, Schufterle! Courage!

SCHWEITZER: Courage? Is that all? I've enough courage to go bare-foot through hell.

SCHUFTERLE: Courage enough to scrap with the devil at the gallows' foot for a poor sinner's soul.

SPIEGELBERG: That's what I like to hear! If you have courage, let one amongst you say he still has anything to lose, and not everything to gain!

SCHWARZ: Indeed, there would be plenty to lose, if I were to lose what I still have to gain!

RATZMANN: Yes, in hell's name! and plenty to gain, if I were to gain what I can't lose!

SCHUFTERLE: If I were to lose everything I have on me that's borrowed, then by tomorrow I should have nothing left to lose.

SPIEGELBERG: Very well, then! (*he takes his place in the midst of them, and adopts an imperious tone*) If there is still one drop of heroic German blood running in your veins—then come! We will hide in the forest of Bohemia, raise a robber band, and—why are you staring at me? Has your little bit of courage melted away already?

ROLLER: I don't suppose you are the first rogue to overlook the gallows—and yet—what else is there we can do?

SPIEGELBERG: What else? Nothing else! There is no choice in the matter! Do you want to sit starving in the debtors' prison till the last trumpet blows? Do you want to scratch with spade and hope for a scrap of stale bread? Do you want to beg for alms, singing ballads at people's windows? Do you want to take the king's shilling—if they would trust the looks of you, that's the first question—and do your stint in Purgatory while you are still on earth, at the mercy of some splenetic tyrant of a corporal? Or be drummed out to run the gauntlet, or tramp the galleys and drag

the whole arsenal of Vulcan's smithy behind you? That is what else there is, that is all the choice you have!

ROLLER: It's not such a bad idea of Spiegelberg's. I have been making plans too, but it is the same kind of thing. How would it be, I thought, if you all sat down and cooked up an anthology or an almanac or something like that, or wrote reviews for a shilling or two? It's all the rage nowadays.

SCHUFTERLE: I'll be hanged if your plans aren't very much like mine. I was thinking to myself, what if you were to turn evangelical, and hold weekly classes in spiritual improvement?

GRIMM: That's it! and if that was no good, turn atheist, blaspheme against the four Gospels, have our book burnt by the hangman, and we should do a roaring trade.

RATZMANN: Or we could set up to cure the pox—I know a doctor who built himself a house on a foundation of mercury, so the motto over the door says.

SCHWEITZER (*stands up and gives Spiegelberg his hand*): Moritz, you are a great man—or a blind pig has found an acorn.

SCHWARZ: Excellent plans! most reputable professions! How great minds think alike! All that's left now is to turn into women and become bawds, or even sell our own virginity on the streets.

SPIEGELBERG: Nonsense, nonsense! And what is to stop you being most of these things in one person? My plan will still do the best for you, and make you famous and immortal too! Look, you poor things! As far ahead as that you must think! Think of the fame that will live after you, the sweet feeling that you will never be forgotten—

ROLLER: And at the top of the list of honest people! You are a master orator, Spiegelberg, when it comes to turning an honest man into a villain.—But doesn't anyone know where Moor is?

SPIEGELBERG: Honest, do you say? What, do you think it will make you any less of an honest man than you are today? What do you call being honest? Relieving rich skinflints of a third of their worries, which only disturb their golden slumbers, anyway; bringing idle money into circulation, restoring the fair distribution of wealth, in a word bringing back the golden age; taking away some of the good Lord's burdens, so that he can be rid of them without war, pestilence, famine, and doctors—that's what I call being an honest man, that's what I call being a worthy instrument in the hand of Providence; and with every joint you

roast to be able to flatter yourself with the thought that it's your own cunning, your own lion's courage, your own long vigils that have earned it; to be respected by great and small—

ROLLER: And in the end to be hoisted up to heaven in the flesh, and come wind come weather, in spite of old Father Time and his greedy appetite, to swing there with sun and moon and all the stars in the firmament, while the birds sing a heavenly concert at the feast and the long-tailed angels sit in sacred council? What? And while monarchs and potentates make a feast for moths and worms, to have the honor of being visited by Jove's royal bird? Moritz, Moritz, Moritz! Beware, beware the three-legged beast!*

SPIEGELBERG: And that frightens you, coward? Why, there's many a virtuoso rotting on the gibbet who might have reformed the world, and won't such a one be spoken of for hundreds and thousands of years, while many a king and many an elector might be left out of history altogether, if it weren't that the historians were afraid to leave a gap in the line of succession, and if it weren't that it made their books a few pages thicker and brought in more cash from the publisher. And if the passerby does see you floating back and forth in the wind, why, he'll think to himself, that must have been no ordinary fellow, and he'll sigh that the world has gone to the dogs.

SCHWEITZER (*slapping him on the back*): Superb, Spiegelberg! Superb! Why the devil do you stand there hesitating?

SCHWARZ: And even if it meant degradation—what more can there be? One can always have a pinch of powder with one, to speed one across the Acheron† if it should come to that, so that one will never hear the cock crow again. No, friend Moritz! it's a good proposal. That's my catechism too.

SCHUFTERLE: Hell! And mine as well. Spiegelberg, I'm your man!

RATZMANN: Like another Orpheus, you have sung my howling brute of a conscience to sleep. Take me as I am!

GRIMM: *Si omnes consentiunt ego non dissentio*. With no comma, mind.‡ They are holding an auction in my head: evangelist, quack doctor, reviewer, and rogue. I'm to be had for the best offer. Here, Moritz, my hand!

*A reference to the three posts of the eighteenth-century gallows.

†Along with the Styx, one of the rivers separating the living from the dead in Greek mythology.

‡“If all give their assent, I do not withhold mine.” A comma after *non* gives the sense “I do not, I withhold mine.”

ROLLER: And you too, Schweitzer? (*offering Spiegelberg his right hand*) Then the devil can take my soul.

SPIEGELBERG: But your name shall be written in the stars! What does it matter where your soul goes? When troops of couriers gallop ahead to announce our descent, so that the devils put on their Sunday best, rub the soot of millennia out of their eyes, and horned heads in their thousands poke from the smoky chimneys of their sulphur ovens to see our arrival? Comrades! (*Jumping up*) Away! Comrades! Is there anything in the world so glorious, so thrilling? Come, comrades, and away!

ROLLER: Gently now, gently! where are you going? the beast must have its head, children!

SPIEGELBERG (*venomously*): What words of hesitation are there? Wasn't the head there before a single limb stirred? follow me, comrades!

ROLLER: Steady on, I say. Even liberty must have its master. Without a head, Rome and Sparta were destroyed.

SPIEGELBERG (*ingratiatingly*): Yes—wait, Roller is right. And the head must be a brilliant one. Do you understand? A shrewd political head it must be. Yes, if I think of what you were an hour ago, and what you are now—are by virtue of a single lucky idea—yes, of course, of course you must have a chief—and the man who thought up that idea, tell me, mustn't he have a brilliant, political head?

ROLLER: If we could only hope—if we could only dream—but I am afraid he will not do it.

SPIEGELBERG: Why not? Speak your mind, friend! Heavy though the task may be of steering the struggling ship against the gale, heavy though the weight of a crown may weigh—speak without fear, Roller! Perhaps he will do it after all.

ROLLER: And the whole thing falls to pieces if he will not. Without Moor we're a body without a soul.

SPIEGELBERG (*turning away from him in disgust*): Blockhead!
(*Enter Moor in wild agitation. He paces violently up and down the room, talking to himself*)

MOOR: Men, men! False breed of hypocrites and crocodiles! Their eyes water, but their hearts are of iron! Kisses on their lips, but swords in their bosom! Lions and leopards feed their young, ravens take their chicks to feast on corpses, and *he, he*.—Wickedness I have learned to endure. I can smile when my archenemy is

drinking my heart's blood; but when blood kinship turns traitor, when a father's love becomes a raging fury; oh, then catch fire, manly resignation, be as a ravening tiger, gentle lamb, and let every fiber stiffen to hatred and destruction!

ROLLER: Listen, Moor! What do you think? A robber's life is better than bread and water in the deepest dungeon after all, isn't it?

MOOR: Why was this spirit not formed into a tiger, that fastens its savage jaws in human flesh? Is this a father's devotion? Is this love for love? Would that I were a bear, and could raise the bears of the north against this race of murderers—repentance, and no forgiveness! Oh, would that I might poison the ocean, that they might drink death from every spring! Trust, submission that none could turn away, and no pity!

ROLLER: Moor, listen to what I am saying!

MOOR: It is unbelievable, it is a dream, a delusion—such moving pleas, such keen representation of my misery and my melting repentance—a brute beast would have wept in compassion! Stones would have shed tears, and yet—it would be thought a wicked slur on all mankind, if I were to say so—and yet, and yet—oh, would that I could blow the trumpet of rebellion throughout the realm of nature, to stir up earth, sky, and sea to battle against this brood of hyenas!

GRIMM: Listen, will you! You are so mad you do not hear.

MOOR: Get away from me! Are you not a man? Are you not born of woman? Out of my sight, you creature with man's face!—I loved him so unspeakably! no son loved so, my life I would a thousand times—(*foaming, stamping on the ground*) ha! he who should put a sword into my hand, to deal a deadly blow to this generation of vipers! he who should say to me: if I can pierce the heart of its life, crush it, strangle it—that man shall be my friend, my angel, my god—I will worship him!

ROLLER: We want to be those friends of yours, let us tell you!

SCHWARZ: Come with us into the forests of Bohemia! We are going to raise a band of robbers, and you—

(*Moor stares at him*)

SCHWEITZER: You are to be our captain! you must be our captain!

SPIEGELBERG (*hurling himself into a chair in fury*): Slaves and cowards!

MOOR: Who gave you that idea? Listen, fellow! (*seizing Schwarz fiercely*) It did not come from your man's soul! Who prompted

you? Yes, by the thousand arms of death! we shall, we must! a thought fit for gods! Robbers and murderers! As sure as my soul breathes, I am your captain!

ALL (*shouting aloud*): Long live our captain!

SPIEGELBERG (*jumping up, aside*): Until I see him off!

MOOR: See, the scales have fallen from my eyes! What a fool I was, to seek to return to the cage! My spirit thirsts for deeds, my lungs for freedom—murderers, robbers! at that word I trampled the law beneath my feet—men showed me no humanity, when to humanity I appealed; so let me forget sympathy and human feeling! I have no father now, I have no love now, and blood and death shall teach me to forget that ever I held anything dear! Oh, my amusement shall be the terror of the earth—it is agreed, I shall be your captain! and good fortune to the champion among you who lights the fiercest fires, who does the foulest murders, for I say to you, he shall have a kingly reward! Gather round me every one, and swear loyalty and obedience till death! Swear by this man's right hand of mine!

ALL (*reaching him their hands*): We swear loyalty and obedience to you till death!

MOOR: Now, and by this man's right hand of mine! I swear to you to remain your captain in loyalty and constancy till death! If any show cowardice or hesitation or retreat, this arm shall strike him down on the spot; the same fate meet me from any and every one of you, if I offend against my oath! Are you agreed?

(*Spiegelberg paces furiously up and down*)

ALL (*throwing their hats in the air*): We are agreed!

MOOR: Very well then, let us go! Fear not death or danger, for an inflexible fate rules over us all. We must endure our going hence, be it on soft pillows of down, be it in the hurly-burly of battle, or be it on the gallows and the wheel! One or the other must be our lot! (*exeunt*)

SPIEGELBERG (*watching them go, after a pause*): There is one missing in your list. Poison you have forgotten. (*exit*)

Scene 3

Old Moor's *castle*. Amalia's *rooms*.

(Franz, Amalia)

FRANZ: You look away, Amalia? Am I less worthy than he whom my father has cursed?

AMALIA: Away!—Oh, merciful, loving father, who will cast his son to the wolves and the wild beasts! while he at home is refreshed with sweet, precious wine, and cossets his feeble limbs in pillows of eiderdown, while his great and glorious son may perish! Shame on you, inhuman creatures! shame on you, you monsters, you abomination of mankind! His only son!

FRANZ: I thought that he had two.

AMALIA: Yes, it is sons like you that he deserves. On his deathbed he will stretch out his withered hands in vain to seek his Karl, and start back in horror when he catches the icy hand of his Franz—oh, it is sweet, it is a sweet and noble thing, to earn your father's curse! Speak, Franz, good soul, good brother, what must one do if one would earn his curse?

FRANZ: My poor love, your fantasy is leading you astray.

AMALIA: Oh, I beg you—do you pity your brother? No, inhuman creature, you hate him! and you hate me too?

FRANZ: I love you as I love myself, Amalia.

AMALIA: If you love me, can you refuse me one request?

FRANZ: Not one, not one! if it is not more than my life.

AMALIA: Oh, if that is true! One request, that you will fulfill so easily, so gladly—(*proudly*) Hate me! I cannot but blush crimson with shame, if I think of Karl and realize that you do not hate me. You promise me? Now go, and leave me—let me be alone!

FRANZ: My sweet dreamer! how I adore your gentle loving heart. (*touching her breast*) Here, here Karl reigned like a god in his temple, Karl stood before you while you were awake, Karl ruled your dreams, all creation seemed to you to be dissolved in him, to reflect him, to echo him and him alone.

AMALIA (*moved*): Yes, it is true, I admit it. In spite of you, barbarians, I confess it to all the world—I love him!

FRANZ: Inhuman, cruel! To reward such love like this! To forget the one—

AMALIA (*starting up*): What, to forget me?

FRANZ: Did you not put a ring upon his finger? a diamond ring, as a pledge of your constancy? But after all, how can a young man withstand a courtesan's charms? Who can blame him when he had nothing left to give away? And did she not pay him with interest for it, with her embraces, with her caresses?

AMALIA (*indignantly*): A courtesan, my ring?

FRANZ: Pah! it is shameful. But if that was all! A ring, however precious, any Jew can replace, if it comes to that—perhaps he did not like the setting, perhaps he changed it for a better one.

AMALIA (*angrily*): But *my* ring, *my* ring, I say?

FRANZ: The very same, Amalia—ah, such a jewel, on my finger—and from Amalia!—death itself could not have torn it from me—is it not so, Amalia? it is not the size of the diamond, it is not the skill of the cutting—it is love that makes it precious—dearest child, you are weeping? Cursed be he who makes these heavenly eyes shed their precious drops—oh, and if only you knew everything, if only you could see him, as he is now!—

AMALIA: Monster! What do you mean, as he is now?

FRANZ: Be still, sweet creature, do not ask me! (*as if to himself, but aloud*) If only there were some veil that could hide it, that filthy vice, so that it could creep out of sight of the world! But no! it shows in all its vileness, in the yellow leaden ring round the eye; the deathly pallor of the sunken cheeks betrays it, and the hideous protruding bones—the stifled, strangled voice mutters of it—the tottering, decrepit frame proclaims it aloud in all its horror—it gnaws the very marrow of the bones, and saps the bold youth's strength—there, there! the suppurating juices start forth from forehead and cheeks and lips and cover the whole body with their loathsome sores, and fester in the dark hollows of bestial disgrace—pah! it revolts me. Nose, ears, eyes shudder at it—you saw him, Amalia, that wretch who coughed out his soul in our infirmary, the modest eye of shame seemed to turn aside from the sight of him—alas for him, you cried! Think of it, summon up that vision once more before your mind's eye, and it is Karl that you see!—His kisses are a pestilence, his lips would poison yours!

AMALIA (*striking him*): Shameless slanderer!

FRANZ: Does it fill you with horror, the thought of such a Karl? Does even my pale sketch disgust you? Go, gape at him himself, your handsome, angelic, divine Karl! Go, breathe in the perfume

of his breath, let the sweet vapors that his throat streams forth envelop you; one breath from his lips, and you would feel the same black swoon of death upon you as if you smelled a rotting corpse or saw the carrion of a battlefield.

(Amalia turns her face away)

FRANZ: What surging tide of love! What bliss in his embrace!—But is it not unjust to damn a man for the sickness of his body? Even the most miserable cripple of an Aesop may hide a great and noble soul, as the mud hides the ruby. *(smiling maliciously)* Even scabbed lips may breathe of love—but yet, if vice has sapped the strength of his character as well, if virtue has fled with chastity, as the perfume fades from the withered rose—if with the body the spirit too is crippled—

AMALIA *(starting up, joyfully)*: Ah, Karl! Now I see you truly again! you are still your own true self! It was all a lie! Do you not know, wicked creature, that these things can never touch my Karl?

(Franz stands for a while deep in thought, then turns suddenly as if to go)

Where are you hurrying to, would you fly from your own shame?

FRANZ *(hiding his face)*: Let me go, let me go! let my tears flow—tyrant of a father! to cast the best of your sons into such misery—to expose him to shame on every side—let me go, Amalia! I will fall on my knees at his feet, I will implore him to let me, me bear the curse that he spoke—to disinherit me—me—to—my life, my blood—everything—

AMALIA *(throwing her arms round his neck)*: Oh, my Karl's brother, dearest, most precious Franz!

FRANZ: Oh, Amalia! how I love you for your unshakable constancy to my brother—forgive me, for presuming to put your love to so harsh a test! How perfectly you vindicate my hopes! With these your tears, these your sighs, this your heavenly displeasure—for me, me too—our souls were always as one.

AMALIA: No, that they never were!

FRANZ: Oh, they were as one, in such sweet harmony, I always thought that we should have been twins! and if it were not for the unhappy difference in outward looks between us, which I admit is not to his advantage, then ten times the one might have been taken for the other. Yes, you are, I said to myself so often, you are Karl himself, his echo, his living image!

AMALIA (*shaking her head*): No, no! by the chaste light of heaven! not one drop of his blood, not one spark of his spirit!

FRANZ: So alike in all our tastes: the rose was his favorite flower—what flower did I ever rate above the rose? He loved music more than words can tell, and I! you stars are my witnesses, how often you have heard me at the keyboard in the silence of the night, when all around me lay buried in shadows and sleep—how can you doubt it still, Amalia, when our love coincided in the same point of perfection, and if love is one, how can its children deny their ancestry?

(*Amalia stares at him in amazement*)

FRANZ: It was a clear, still evening, the last night before he set off for Leipzig, when he took me with him to the arbor where you so often sat together, dreaming of love—we sat there long in silence—at last he took my hand and spoke softly and with tears in his eyes: I am leaving Amalia, I do not know—I feel that it may be forever—do not leave her, brother! be her friend—her Karl—if Karl should—not—return.—! (*He falls on his knees before her and kisses her hand passionately*) No, he will not return, never, never, and I have promised him with a sacred oath!

AMALIA (*drawing back sharply*): Traitor, I have found you out! In this same arbor he made me swear never to love another—if he should not—see, how blasphemously, how vilely you—out of my sight!

FRANZ: You mistake me, Amalia, you are quite mistaken in me!

AMALIA: Oh, I am not mistaken in you, I know you from this moment—and you would be his equal? And you say it was to you he wept for my sake? To you? He would sooner have written my name upon the pillory! Go, this instant!

FRANZ: You do me an injustice!

AMALIA: Go, I say! You have robbed me of a precious hour, let your life be so much the shorter.

FRANZ: You hate me.

AMALIA: I despise you, go!

FRANZ (*stamping his foot*): Wait! I will make you tremble before me! To sacrifice me to a beggar? (*exit, angrily*)

AMALIA: Go, base creature!—now I am with Karl again—a beggar did he say? Why then, the world is turned upside-down, beggars are kings and kings are beggars! I would not change the rags he

wears for the purple of the anointed—the look with which he begs for alms must be a noble and a kingly look—a look to wither the pomp and splendor, the triumph of the great and rich! Into the dust with you, idle jewels! (*tearing the pearls from her throat*) Be condemned, you great and rich, to wear your gold and silver and your precious stones, to glut yourselves at feasts and banquets, to stretch your limbs on the soft couch of ease! Karl! Karl! You see that I am worthy of you. (*exit*)

Act 2

Scene 1

(Franz von Moor, *brooding in his room.*)

FRANZ: It takes too long for my liking—the doctor says he is on the mend—an old man's life is an eternity! And now my path would be clear and smooth before me, but for this miserable lump of tough flesh that bars the way to my treasures like the magic subterranean dog in the fairy tale.* But must my plans submit to the iron yoke of mechanical laws? Is my high-flying spirit to be bound to the snail's pace of material necessity?—Blow out a light that in any case is only stretching the last drop of oil—that is all there is to it; and yet I would rather not have done it myself, on account of what people will say. I would not have him killed, but put down. I should like to do it like a skilled doctor—only the other way around: not to put a spoke in nature's wheel, but to help her in her own design. And if we can prolong the conditions of life as we can, why should we not be able to abbreviate them? Doctors and philosophers have taught me how finely the motions of the mind are attuned to those of the machine that houses it. Convulsive attacks are accompanied by dissonant vibrations in the machine; passions disturb the vital force; the overburdened spirit weighs down its vehicle. What then? If one could discover how to smooth death this untrodden path into the citadel of life? to destroy the body through the soul?—ha! a masterpiece! The man who could do that—? A work of genius! Think, Moor! An art that deserved you for its discoverer! After all, poisoning has

*The dog that guards an underground treasure is a motif in numerous sagas, e.g., "Die Entstehung der Bergwerke auf dem Rammelsberg." Franz makes a similar allusion again in act 3, scene 1.

now been raised almost to the rank of a full-blown science, and experiments have forced nature to make known her limitations, so that the beats of the heart can now be reckoned out years in advance and one can say to the pulse: thus far, and no further!* Is not this a field where one might try one's wings? And how must I set about it, now, to disturb the sweet peace and harmony of body and soul? What species of sensation shall I have to choose? Which will be the deadliest enemies of the flower of life? Anger?—a ravening wolf that devours its prey too quickly. Care?—a worm that gnaws too slowly. Sorrow?—a snake that creeps too sluggishly. Fear?—when hope will always check its growth? What? Has man no other executioners? Is the arsenal of death so soon exhausted? (*brooding*) What? Well? No!—Ah! (*starting up*) Terror! What can terror not accomplish? What can reason or religion do to stay the monster's icy embrace?—And yet?—If he could withstand that assault? If he could?—Oh, then come to my aid, grief, and you, repentance, fury of hell, burrowing serpent that chew again what you have once devoured, and feed again upon your own filth; eternal destroyers and eternal breeders of your poison; and you, howling self-reproach, who make desolate your own house, and wound your own mother's heart—and come you too to my aid, you beneficent graces yourselves, soft smiling past, and future with your cornucopia overflowing with blossoms, show him in your glass the joys of heaven, and then let your fleeting foot escape his greedy arm.—Blow upon blow, storm upon storm I will bring down upon this fragile life, till at last there comes, to crown the troop of furies—despair! Triumph! triumph! the plan is made—tight and cunning as could be—safe—foolproof; for (*mockingly*) there will be no trace of a wound nor corrosive poison for the anatomist's knife to reveal. (*resolutely*) Very well, then!

(*Enter Hermann*)

Ha! *Deus ex machina!* Hermann!

HERMANN: At your service, young Master!

FRANZ (*giving him his hand*): I am not ungrateful for it.

HERMANN: I have proof of that.

*Schiller's note: "A woman in Paris is said to have achieved such success in systematic experiments with doses of poison that she could give the date of death in advance with some measure of reliability. Shame on our doctors, that this woman excels them in prognosis!"

FRANZ: You shall have more very soon—very soon, Hermann!—I have something to tell you, Hermann.

HERMANN: I am all ears.

FRANZ: I know you, you are a resolute fellow—a soldier's heart—a man of courage.—My father did you a great injustice, Hermann!

HERMANN: The devil take me if ever I forget it!

FRANZ: Spoken like a man! Revenge is sweet, and a man deserves it. I like you, Hermann. Take this purse, Hermann. It would be heavier, if only I were lord here.

HERMANN: That is my only wish, young Master. I thank you.

FRANZ: Truly, Hermann? do you truly wish that I was lord?—But my father is as strong as a lion, and I am the younger son.

HERMANN: I wish you were the elder son, and I wish your father were as strong as a consumptive girl.

FRANZ: Oh, how the elder son would reward you then! how he would raise you from this ignoble dust, that suits so ill your spirit and nobility, raise you up into the light!—Then you should be covered with gold, just as you are, and rattle through the streets with four horses, indeed you should!—But I am forgetting what I wanted to say to you. Have you forgotten the Lady Amalia, Hermann?

HERMANN: Damnation! why do you remind me of that?

FRANZ: My brother whisked her away from you.

HERMANN: He'll pay for it!

FRANZ: She turned you down. I believe he even threw you down the stairs.

HERMANN: I'll hurl him into hell for it.

FRANZ: He said people were whispering that you were caught between the roast beef and the horseradish, and your father could never look at you without beating his breast and sighing: God have mercy on me, miserable sinner!

HERMANN (*furiously*): By the burning fiery furnace! be silent!

FRANZ: He told you to auction your patent of nobility, and have your breeches patched with it.

HERMANN: By all the devils! I'll tear out his eyes with my nails!

FRANZ: What? you are angry? what can make you angry with him? What can you do to him? How can a rat hurt a lion? Your anger will only make his triumph sweeter. You can do nothing but grit your teeth and vent your rage on a piece of stale bread.

HERMANN (*stamping on the floor*): I'll grind him to dust.

friend I am to you, how nearly your fate touches my heart—go, put on different clothes, disguise yourself so that no one will know you, and have yourself announced to the old man—say that you have come straight from Bohemia, that you were with my brother at the battle of Prague, that you saw him breathe his last on the battlefield—

HERMANN: Will they believe me?

FRANZ: Aha, let me take care of that! Take this packet. Here you will find everything set out for you to do. And documents that would convince doubt itself—look to it now, be on your way, and don't be seen! through the back door into the courtyard, jump over the garden wall—leave the climax of this tragicomedy to me!

HERMANN: And that will be: long live our new lord and master, Franciscus von Moor!

FRANZ (*stroking his cheek*): Clever, are you not?—for do you see, in this way we shall achieve all our goals at once, and quickly. Amalia will give up all hope of him. The old man will blame himself for his son's death, and—he is sickly—a rickety building does not need an earthquake to bring it crashing down—he will not survive the news. Then I shall be his only son—Amalia will have lost all support, and will be the plaything of my will, you can imagine—in short, everything will be as we would have it—but you must not take back your word!

HERMANN: What are you saying? [*jubilant*] Sooner may the bullet turn in its flight and tear the marksman's own bowels—count on me! Leave everything to me.—Adieu!

FRANZ (*calling after him*): The harvest is yours, my dear Hermann!—When the ox has carted the corn to the barn, he has to make do with hay. A stablemaid for you, and no Amalia! (*exit*)

Scene 2

Old Moor's bedroom.

(*Old Moor, asleep in an armchair. Amalia*)

AMALIA (*creeping softly in*): Softly, softly, he is asleep! (*standing before him as he sleeps*) How handsome, how venerable!—vener-

able like the portrait of a saint—no, I cannot be angry with you! Dear white head, with you I cannot be angry! Rest asleep, wake joyfully—I alone will go my way in suffering.

OLD MOOR (*dreaming*): My son! my son! my son!

AMALIA (*taking his hand*): Hark, hark! his son is in his dreams.

OLD MOOR: Is it you? is it really you? ah, how wretchedly you look!

Do not turn that sorrowful gaze upon me! I am wretched enough!

AMALIA (*waking him quickly*): Look about you, sweet old man!

You only dreamed. Have courage!

OLD MOOR (*half awake*): He was not there? Did I not hold his hands in mine? Cruel Franz! will you tear him even from my dreams?

AMALIA: Do you hear, Amalia?

OLD MOOR (*more cheerfully*): Where is he? where? Where am I?

You here, Amalia?

AMALIA: How is it with you? You were asleep, your rest has refreshed you.

OLD MOOR: I was dreaming of my son. Why could I not dream on?

I might have heard his lips speak forgiveness.

AMALIA: Angels bear no grudge—he has forgiven you. (*taking his hand sorrowfully*) Father of my Karl! I forgive you.

OLD MOOR: No, my daughter! His father stands condemned by the deathly pallor of your face. Unhappy girl! I robbed you of the joys of your youth—oh, do not curse me!

AMALIA (*kissing his hand tenderly*): You?

OLD MOOR: Do you know this portrait, my daughter?

AMALIA: Karl's!

OLD MOOR: So he looked, when he was in his sixteenth year. Now he is different—oh, my breast is aflame,—this gentleness is wrath, this smile despair—is it not so, Amalia? It was his birthday when you painted him, in the jasmine arbor?—Oh, my daughter! Your love brought me such joy.

AMALIA (*not taking her eyes off the portrait*): No, no! it is not he. In heaven's name, that is not Karl. Here, here—(*pointing to her heart and her forehead*) The whole, so different. These dull colors cannot reflect the divine spirit that shone in his fiery eye. Away with it! this is a mere man. I was but a bungler.

OLD MOOR: This warm look of devotion—if he had stood before my bed, in the midst of death I had lived! Never, never should I have died!

AMALIA: Never, never should you have died! A leap it would have been, as one springs from one thought to another and a finer—this look would have lighted your path beyond the grave. This look would have borne you on beyond the stars!

OLD MOOR: It is sad, it is hard to endure! I am dying, and my son Karl is not here—I shall be carried to my grave, and he will not be at my grave to weep—how sweet it is to be lulled into the sleep of death by a son's prayer—it is like a lullaby.

AMALIA (*rapturously*): Yes, sweet, sweet as heaven it is, to be lulled into the sleep of death by a lover's song—perhaps we may dream on still in the grave—one long eternal never-ending dream of Karl until the bell tolls for the day of resurrection (*leaping to her feet in ecstasy*)—and from that moment on, in his arms forever. (*pause. She goes to the keyboard, and plays*)

Hector, wilt thou bid farewell forever,
Now Achilles with his murd'rous quiver
Fearful vengeance for Patroclus swears?
Who will teach thy tender son to fight,
To cast his spear, and fear the Gods of right,
When my corpse grim Xanthus downward bears?

OLD MOOR: A beautiful song, my daughter. You must play it for me before I die.

AMALIA: It is the farewell of Andromache and Hector—Karl and I have often sung it to the lute together. (*continuing*)

Dearest wife, go, fetch the fateful lance,
Let me go to tread war's horrid dance,
On my back the weight of Ilium;
The Gods shield Astyanax with their hand!
Hector falls, to save his fatherland,
We shall greet each other in Elysium.

(*Enter Daniel*)

DANIEL: There is a man waiting for you outside. He asks to be allowed to see you, he says he has an important piece of news for you.

OLD MOOR: Only one thing in the world is important to me, you know what that is, Amalia—is it a man fallen on ill luck, who has need of help from me? He shall not go sighing on his way.

AMALIA: If it is a beggar, make haste and send him up.

(*Exit Daniel*)

OLD MOOR: Amalia, Amalia! have pity on me!

AMALIA (*continuing to play*):

Never shall I hear thy weapons sing,
In thy hall thy arms lie moldering;
Priam's race of heroes is passed by!
Thou art gone where never daylight gleams,
Where Cocytus through the desert streams,
In dread Lethe's flood thy love will die.

All my thoughts, ambition's crown
Shall dread Lethe's flood in blackness drown,
But never yet my love!
Hark now! at the walls, the wild one raving—
Gird my sword about me, cease thy grieving!
Lethe shall not drown thy Hector's love!

(*Enter Franz, Hermann in disguise, Daniel*)

FRANZ: Here is the man. Terrible news, he says, awaits you. Can you bear to hear it?

OLD MOOR: It can be only one thing. Come here, friend, and do not spare me! Give him a cup of wine.

HERMANN (*disguising his voice*): My lord! do not punish a poor man, if against his own will he should pierce your heart. I am a stranger in this land, but you I know well, you are Karl von Moor's father.

OLD MOOR: How do you know?

HERMANN: I knew your son—

AMALIA (*starting up*): He is alive? alive? You know him? where is he, where, where? (*making as if to run out*)

OLD MOOR: You can tell me what has happened to my son?

HERMANN: He was a student in Leipzig. From there he went on his wanderings, I do not know how far. He wandered all over Germany, bareheaded, as he told me, and without shoes, and begged his bread at men's doors. Five months later, the hateful war broke out between Prussia and Austria, and as he had nothing left to hope for in this world, King Frederick's victorious drum summoned him to Bohemia. Let me die, he said, to the great Schwerin,* let me die the death of a hero, as I have no father more!

OLD MOOR (*burying his face in the pillow*): Oh, peace, oh peace!

*Kurt Christoph, Count von Schwerin (1684–1757), Prussian general and close advisor of Frederick the Great.

HERMANN: A week later came the great fight at Prague—I can tell you, your son stood his ground like a true warrior. He did miracles before the army's eyes. Five times they had to relieve the regiment beside him; he stood firm. Grenades fell to left and to right of him; your son stood firm. A bullet shattered his right hand; your son took the standard in his left, and stood firm—

AMALIA (*ecstatically*): Hector, Hector! Stood firm, you hear it, stood firm—

HERMANN: I found him on the evening of the battle, lying there with the bullets whistling round, with his left hand trying to stem the flow of blood, his right he had buried in the ground. Brother! he cried out when he saw me. There was a rumor in the ranks that the general was killed an hour ago—killed! I cried, and you?—Why then, he cried, and took his left hand away, let every true soldier follow his general with me! Soon after he breathed out his mighty soul, to follow where the hero led.

FRANZ (*attacking Hermann savagely*): May death seal your accursed lips! Have you come here to deal our father his deathblow?—Father! Amalia! Father!

HERMANN: It was my dying comrade's last wish. Take my sword, he groaned, take it, give it to my old father; it is stained with his son's blood. He is avenged; let him rejoice. Tell him it was his curse that drove me to battle, war, and death. Tell him I am fallen in despair! His last gasp was—Amalia!

AMALIA (*as if roused from a sleep of death*): His last gasp, Amalia!

OLD MOOR (*crying out horribly, tearing his hair*): My curse that drove him to death! fallen in despair!

FRANZ (*pacing about the room*): Oh, Father, what have you done? My Karl, my brother!

HERMANN: Here is the sword, and here too is a portrait that he took from his bosom! It is this lady, to the life! Give this to my brother Franz, he said—I do not know what he meant by it.

FRANZ (*as if amazed*): To me! Amalia's portrait? To me, Karl, Amalia? Me?

AMALIA (*attacking Hermann furiously*): Vile deceiver, who has paid you, who has bribed you? (*seizing him*)

HERMANN: No one, my lady. See for yourself if it is not your portrait—you must have given it to him yourself.

FRANZ: Dear God, Amalia, it is yours! It is truly yours!

AMALIA (*returning the portrait*): Mine, mine! Oh, heaven and earth!

OLD MOOR (*crying out, clawing at his face*): Woe, woe! my curse that drove him to death! fallen in despair!

FRANZ: And he could think of me in the last terrible hour of his departing, of me! Soul of an angel—as death's black banner already swept over him—of me!

OLD MOOR (*babbling*): My curse that drove him, to death, fallen, my son, in despair!

HERMANN: This grief is more than I can bear. Farewell, old Lord! (*softly to Franz*) Why did you have to go so far, young Master? (*exit, quickly*)

AMALIA (*jumping up, running after him*): Stay, stay! What were his last words?

HERMANN (*calling over his shoulder*): His last gasp was Amalia. (*exit*)

AMALIA: His last gasp was Amalia!—No, you are not deceiving us! So it is true—true—he is dead—dead! (*swaying to and fro, and finally falling to the ground*) Dead—Karl is dead—

FRANZ: What do I see? What is this on the sword? words written in the blood—Amalia!

AMALIA: His words?

FRANZ: Do I see aright, or am I dreaming? Look there, letters of blood: Franz, do not desert my Amalia! Look, look! and on the other side: Amalia, all-powerful death releases you from your oath—Do you see, do you see? He wrote it as his fingers stiffened, wrote it in his heart's warm blood, wrote it upon the solemn brink of eternity! his fleeting spirit stayed a moment, that Franz and Amalia might be joined.

AMALIA: God in Heaven! it is his hand.—He never loved me! (*hurrying off*)

FRANZ (*stamping on the floor*): Desperation! all my art is foiled by such obstinacy!

OLD MOOR: Woe, woe! Do you leave me, my daughter!—Franz, Franz! give me back my son!

FRANZ: Who was it that cursed him? Who was it that drove his son to battle and death and despair?—Oh! he was an angel! a jewel in heaven's crown! Curses upon them that slew him! Curses, curses upon you yourself!—

OLD MOOR (*striking breast and forehead with his clenched fist*): He was an angel, a jewel in heaven's crown! Curses, curses,

destruction and curses upon myself! I am the father that slew his mighty son! Me, me he loved unto death! To avenge me he hurled himself into battle and death! Monster, monster! (*venting his rage upon himself*)

FRANZ: He is gone, it is too late for remorse! (*laughing scornfully*) It is easier to murder than to bring to life. You will never raise him from his grave again.

OLD MOOR: Never, never, never raise him from his grave again! Gone, gone, lost forever!—And it was you who talked me into cursing him, you—you—Give me back my son!

FRANZ: Do not tempt my wrath! I will leave you to die!

OLD MOOR: Vampire! vampire! give me my son again! (*Springing up from his chair and attempting to seize Franz by the throat; Franz hurls him back*)

FRANZ: Feeble old bag of bones! You dare—die! despair!

OLD MOOR: A thousand curses ring about your ears! You stole my son from my very arms. (*twisting and turning in his chair in despair*) Woe, woe! To despair, but not to die! They flee, they leave me to die—my good angels flee from me, all that is holy flees the cold gray murderer—Woe! woe! is there no one to hold my head, is there no one to free my struggling soul from its prison? No sons! no daughters! no friends!—only men—is there none, alone—abandoned—woe! woe!—To despair, but not to die!

(*Enter Amalia, her eyes red with weeping*)

OLD MOOR: Amalia! Messenger of heaven! Have you come to free my soul?

AMALIA (*in a gentler tone*): You have lost a glorious son.

OLD MOOR: Murdered him, you mean to say. Laden with this accusation shall I step before God's judgment seat!

AMALIA: Not so, old man who grieve so greatly! Our Heavenly Father summoned him. We should have been too happy in this world.—There, there beyond the stars—we shall see him again.

OLD MOOR: See him again, see him again! Oh, it shall be as a sword to smite my soul—if I a saint find him among the ranks of the saints—in the midst of heaven I shall be encompassed with the terrors of hell! In the sight of the Eternal, bowed down as I recall: it was I that slew my son!

AMALIA: Oh, he will smile the recollection and the pain from your soul, be of good cheer, dear Father, even as I am! Has he not already sung the name Amalia to the angel's harp, for the heav-

enly hosts to hear, and the hosts of heaven whispered it after him? His last gasp was—Amalia; will he not cry out in his jubilation: Amalia! before all?

OLD MOOR: Heavenly comfort drops from your lips! He will smile, you say? forgive me? You must stay at my side, my Karl's true love, when I am dying.

AMALIA: To die is to fly to his arms! Oh, happy! I envy you. Why are these bones not brittle? Why are the hairs on this head not gray? Alas, for the strength of youth! Welcome, feeble old age! to bring me nearer to heaven and my Karl.

(Enter Franz)

OLD MOOR: Come to me! my son! Forgive me if I was too harsh with you before! I forgive you everything. I would so gladly breathe my last in peace.

FRANZ: Have you done with weeping for your son?—as far as I can see, you have only the one.

OLD MOOR: Jacob's sons were twelve, but for the one he wept tears of blood.

FRANZ: Humph!

OLD MOOR: Go and fetch the Bible, my daughter, and read me the story of Jacob and Joseph! It moved me always so to hear it, and then I was not yet a Jacob.

AMALIA: What part shall I read you? *(she takes the Bible and turns the pages)*

OLD MOOR: Read me the grief of him in his bereavement, when he could not find him among his children—and waited in vain for him, in the circle of the eleven—and his lamentation as he heard his Joseph was taken from him forever.

AMALIA *(reads)*: “And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they rent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no?”

(Franz hurries suddenly away)

“And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.”

OLD MOOR *(falls back upon the pillow)*: Rent in pieces! An evil beast hath devoured him!

AMALIA *(reading on)*: “And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused

to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.—”

OLD MOOR: Stop, stop! I am not well!

AMALIA (*rushing to his side, dropping the book*): Heaven protect us! What is this?

OLD MOOR: It is death! Black—swimming—before—my eyes—I beg you—call the pastor—that I may—take the sacrament.—Where is—my son Franz?

AMALIA: He is fled! God have mercy upon us!

OLD MOOR: Fled—fled from the bedside of the dying?—And this all—all—two sons, full of hope—the Lord gave—the Lord hath—taken away—blessed be the name of—

AMALIA (*crying out suddenly*): Dead! All dead! (*exit, in despair*)
(*Enter Franz, skipping for joy*)

FRANZ: Dead! they cry, dead! Now I am your lord and master. A hue and cry in all the castle: dead!—But what, perhaps he is only asleep? to be sure! a sleep that surely is that will never hear a good morning again—sleep and death are but twins. Let us just confuse the names! Welcome, brave sleep! We will call you death. (*closing his father's eyes*) Who will come now, and dare to summon me before the courts? or say to my face: you are a villain! Away then with this burdensome mask of gentleness and virtue! Now you shall see Franz naked as he is, and cringe in terror! My father sugared his commands, made his territories one happy family, sat smiling at the gate, and called everyone brother and sister.—My brows shall beetle over you like stormclouds, my imperious name hover like a threatening comet over those mountaintops, my forehead shall be your barometer! He stroked and fondled the necks that would not bow, but rose in spite against him. I am not one for stroking and fondling. I will set my pointed spurs into your flesh, and see what a keen whip will do.—In my lands the day will come when potatoes and beer make a holiday feast, and woe betide any I meet with full and rosy cheeks! Ashen-white of poverty and slavish fear is my favorite color: that is the livery I will have you wear! (*exit*)

Scene 3

The forest of Bohemia.

(Spiegelberg, Ratzmann, Robbers)

RATZMANN: Are you there? Is it really you? Ah, Moritz, Moritz, brother of my heart, I could hug you to pulp! Welcome to the forest of Bohemia! Why, you've grown big and strong. Hell's bells, buckets of blood! New men too, a whole gang you've brought! That's what I call recruiting!

SPIEGELBERG: Isn't it, brother, isn't it? And fine fellows too! —Do you not think the hand of God is upon me, poor hungry wretch that I was, with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now there are seventy-eight of us; mostly bankrupt shopkeepers, bachelors who've failed their disputations, clerks from the Swabian provinces, what a body of men! charming fellows, who would steal each other's flybuttons, and won't sleep beside each other without their guns loaded—who keep their pistols primed, and have a reputation for a hundred miles around, you'd never believe it. You'll not find a newspaper without a little item about Spiegelberg the mastermind—it's the only reason I take them—descriptions of me from head to toe, you'd think you could see me with your own eyes—they've not left out the buttons on my jacket. But we have been leading them around by the nose. One day I went to a printer's, told him I had seen the notorious Spiegelberg, and dictated to a scribbler that was sitting there the spitting likeness of some miserable quack doctor in town; the thing gets around, the fellow is arrested, interrogated *par force*, and the fool is so frightened that damn me if he doesn't confess that he is your notorious Spiegelberg! Hell's teeth! I was near jumping up to go and complain to the magistrates about the scurvy creature abusing my name—anyhow, three months later there he swings. I had to take a strong pinch of snuff, I can tell you, when I strolled by the gibbet and saw pseudo-Spiegelberg up there in all his glory—and while Spiegelberg dangles, Spiegelberg slips quietly out of the noose, and cocks a snook at wise-owl Justice behind her back—it's enough to make you weep!

RATZMANN (*laughing*): You're still the same as ever.

SPIEGELBERG: I am indeed, as you see, body and soul. Fool!—I must

tell you the trick I played at St. Cecilia's Convent. I reached the convent on my wanderings one evening as it was getting dark, and as I hadn't fired a single shot that day—you know I hate the thought of *diem perdidit** like poison, so it was high time to brighten up the night with some escapade, even if it meant singeing the devil's ears! We wait quietly until late at night. Everything is as quiet as a mouse. The lights go out. We reckon the nuns will be between the sheets. Now I take my comrade Grimm with me, tell the others to wait outside the gate until they hear my whistle—take care of the convent porter, get his keys off him, creep in where the girls are sleeping, whisk their clothes away, and pile them all up outside the gate. On we go, one cell after the other, take all the sisters' clothes in turn, last of all the abbess's—then I whistle, and my fellows outside kick up a commotion as if it was the Day of Judgment, and into the sisters' cells, roaring like wild beasts!—Ha, ha, ha! you should have seen the sport we had, the poor creatures fumbling around in the dark for their petticoats, and weeping and wailing, when they found the devil had taken them! and us upon them like a whirlwind, and them rolling themselves up in their blankets, so surprised and scared they were, or creeping under the stove like cats, and some of them wetting themselves with fright, poor things, you could have learned to swim in there, and the hue and cry and lamentation, and last of all the old hag of an abbess, dressed like Eve before the Fall—brother, you know there is no creature in all this world I hate more than a spider and an old woman, and just imagine now that wizened, hairy old dragon dancing about in front of me, conjuring me by her maiden's honor—the devil! I was already putting my fists up to knock her last few teeth all the way through her guts—make up your mind! either out with the silver, the treasure chest and all those dear little shiny sovereigns, or—my fellows knew what I meant—I tell you, I cleaned out that convent of more than a thousand's worth, and had the fun too, and my fellows left them a memento to carry around for the next nine months.

RATZMANN: Damnation, why wasn't I there?

SPIEGELBERG: You see? Go on, tell me, isn't that a life of luxury? and it keeps you fit and strong, and the corpus is all in one piece, and growing every hour like a bishop's belly—I don't know, there

*I have lost a day.

must be something magnetic about me that attracts all the rogues and vagabonds on God's earth like iron and steel.

RATZMANN: A fine magnet you are! But hang me, I should like to know what witchcraft you use!

SPIEGELBERG: Witchcraft? No need of witchcraft—you must just have your wits about you! A certain practical expertise, that doesn't grow on trees, I admit—what I always say is, you see: you can make an honest man out of any old stick, but for a villain, you need gray matter—and you want a certain national talent too, a kind of, so to speak, villain's climate, and I'll tell you what: go to Graubünden—That's the Mecca of rogues today.*

RATZMANN: Ah, Brother! Italy, they tell me, is a good place altogether.

SPIEGELBERG: Oh yes, yes! everyone must have his due, Italy has had its share of good men, and if Germany goes on as it is going today, and they abolish the Bible completely, as there is every appearance, then Germany may produce something worthwhile too, in time—but altogether, let me tell you, climate makes very little difference. Genius will thrive in any soil, and the rest, Brother—well, you know, a crab won't turn into a pineapple even in the Garden of Eden—but, as I was explaining to you—where was I?

RATZMANN: You were coming to the tricks of the trade.

SPIEGELBERG: Yes, the tricks of the trade! Well then, the first thing you must do when you come to any town is to find out from the police, the jailer and the poorhouse keeper who it is they see most of, who comes to present his compliments most often, and these are the customers you must look for—then, you establish yourself in the coffeehouses, the brothels, and the inns, keep your eyes open, sound people out, see who complains the loudest about their miserable five percent these days, or about the pestilential increase in law and order, who curses the government most, or holds forth about the fashion for physiognomy and that kind of thing! Then you know where you are, brother! Honesty wobbles like a hollow tooth; just get out your pincers—or, better and quicker: you go and drop a purse full of money in the street where everyone can see it, hide yourself somewhere by, and see who

*The Swiss canton of Graubünden officially protested this line, resulting in a severe reprimand of Schiller by the duke of Württemberg.

picks it up; then after a bit you come chasing after, looking around, and crying out, and ask him, just as it might be in passing, did the gentleman not find a purse of money? If he says yes, well, then the devil was watching; but if he denies it? You will excuse me, sir—I really cannot remember—I am sorry, (*jumping up*) victory, brother, victory! Put out your light, cunning Diogenes!—you have found the man you wanted.

RATZMANN: You are an expert practitioner.

SPIEGELBERG: God! as if I had ever doubted it.—Now that you have got your man on the hook, you must be careful how you go about landing him! Look, my lad, this is how I have always done it. As soon as I was on the trail, I stuck to my candidate like a burr, drank and swore friendship with him, and *nota bene*! you must pay for every round! It will cost you a tidy penny, but you must not mind that—on you go, introduce him to gaming and doubtful company, get him involved in a fight, and mischief of one kind and another, till he is bankrupt of strength and resistance and money and conscience and good name; and by the by, I must tell you, you will get nowhere unless you destroy both body and soul—believe me, brother! I must have drawn the conclusion fifty times in my extensive operations, that once the honest man is chased from his nest, the devil is master—it's as easy a step—oh, as easy a step as from a whore to a pious old maid.—But hark! was that a shot?

RATZMANN: It was the thunder, go on!

SPIEGELBERG: A still quicker, better way is this: you rob your man of house and home, till he hasn't the shirt left on his back, then he'll come to you of his own accord—don't ask me the tricks, brother, just ask that red-faced fellow over there—the pox! I outfitted him nicely—I showed him forty ducats, said they were his if he would take a pressing of his master's keys in wax for me—imagine! the stupid brute does it, devil take me if he doesn't bring me the keys and ask for his money.—My good fellow, says I, let me tell you that I shall take these keys straight to the superintendent of police and book you a place on the gibbet!—Strike me dead! you should have seen the fellow: his eyes popped and he shivered like a wet poodle—“In heaven's name! will the gentleman not be reasonable? I will—I will—” “What then, man? Will you tuck up your

*Diogenes, of the fourth century B.C., is the main representative of the Cynic school of philosophy. He is said to have searched, lamp in hand, for an honest man.

pigtail and go to the devil with me?"—"Oh yes, with pleasure, anything you say"—Ha, ha, ha! poor simpleton, mice like cheese, don't they?—Have a good laugh at him, Ratzmann! ha, ha!

RATZMANN: Yes, yes, I must admit. I will inscribe your lesson in golden characters on the tablets of my memory. Satan must know his man, choosing you for his scout.

SPIEGELBERG: Don't you think so, brother? And I reckon if I catch ten more for him he will let me go free—a publisher gives his agent one free copy in ten, why should the devil be such a Jew?—Ratzmann! I can smell powder.

RATZMANN: Confound it! I have smelled it for a long time. Mark my words, something will be up not far from here!—Yes, yes, I tell you, Moritz—the captain will be glad to see you and your recruits—he has enlisted some fine fellows, too.

SPIEGELBERG: But mine! mine! Pah—

RATZMANN: Yes, they look light-fingered enough—but I tell you, our captain's reputation has led honest men into temptation too.

SPIEGELBERG: I hope not!

RATZMANN: Sans jest! and they're not ashamed to serve under him. He doesn't murder for plunder as we do—he didn't seem to care about the money, as long as he could keep his pistols primed, and even the third of the booty that is his by right he would give away to orphans, or to promising lads from poor homes so that they could study. But if there is a squire to be fleeced, one that drives his peasants like cattle, or if we get hold of some gold-braided scoundrel that twists the laws to his own advantage, and makes justice wink with silver, or any fine fellow of that kind—man! then he's in his element, and the devil's in him, as if every nerve of his body was a fury.

SPIEGELBERG: Hmm, hmm!

RATZMANN: Not so long ago we were in an inn, and got wind that a rich count was on his way from Regensburg, who had just won a case worth a million, thanks to a crafty lawyer—he was sitting at the table playing backgammon—how many of us are there? he asked me, and jumped to his feet. I saw him biting his lip, as he only does when he is in a real rage—five at the most! I said—it's enough! he said, threw the money for the landlady on the table, left the wine untouched that he had ordered—we set off on our way. The whole time he didn't speak a word, went aside by himself, only asked us from time to time whether we could not

hear anything yet, and told us to put our ears to the ground. At last, there comes the count riding along, his carriage weighed down with baggage, the lawyer sitting inside with him, one man riding ahead, two servants alongside—then you should have seen the man, bounding up to the carriage ahead of us, with two pistols in his hand! and his voice, as he shouted, “Stop!” The coachman didn’t want to stop, but he had to take a dive from the box, the count shot out of the carriage door, but it was useless, the riders fled—“Your money, scum!” he cried, in a voice like thunder—he lay like a bullock under the ax—“And are you the villain who makes a whore of justice?” The lawyer shook so that you could hear his teeth chattering—then there was a dagger in his belly, sticking up like a stake in a vineyard—“I have done my part!” he cried, and turned away from us in his proud fashion—“plundering is your business.” And with that he disappeared into the woods—

SPIEGELBERG: Hmm, hmm!—brother, what I told you just now was between ourselves, he needn’t know about it. Do you understand?

RATZMANN: Yes, yes, I understand!

SPIEGELBERG: You know what he is like? He has his whims. You understand me.

RATZMANN: Very well, I understand.

(Enter Schwarz, at full speed)

SCHWARZ: Quick, quick! where are the others? By all the sacraments! you standing there, and talking? Don’t you know—don’t you know, then?—and Roller—

RATZMANN: What then, what then?

SCHWARZ: Roller has been hanged, and four others too.

RATZMANN: Roller? The plague! but when—how do you know?

SCHWARZ: Three weeks and more he was inside, and we heard nothing, three times they have had him up, and we heard nothing, they tortured him to find out where the captain was—he gave nothing away, stout lad, yesterday they tried him and this morning he was sent by express to the devil.

RATZMANN: Damnation! Does the captain know?

SCHWARZ: He only heard about it yesterday. He was foaming like a wild boar. You know Roller was always his favorite, and now torture—he had ropes and ladders brought to the prison, but it was no use—he dressed up as a friar himself and got in there, and wanted to take Roller’s place, but Roller turned it down flat, now

he has sworn an oath that made our blood freeze that he will light him a funeral pyre such as no king ever had, one that will burn them black-and-blue. I wouldn't like to be in that town. He has had it in for them for a long time because they are such miserable bigots, and you know, when he says: I will do it! it's as much as if you or I had already done it.

RATZMANN: That's true! I know the captain. If he had given the devil his word that he would go to hell, he would never say a prayer, even though he could save himself with half an Our Father! But oh! poor Roller! poor Roller!

SPIEGELBERG: *Memento mori!* But it makes no difference to me.
(singing)

As I go past the gallows tree,
I turn my head and blink my eye,
And think, as you swing there so free,
Who's the fool now, you or I?

RATZMANN (jumping up): Hark! a shot.
(Shooting and noises)

SPIEGELBERG: Another!

RATZMANN: And another! the captain!

VOICES (singing offstage):

In Nuremberg you'll never hang,
Unless they catch you first. (*da capo.*)

SCHWEITZER, ROLLER (offstage): Hey, hallo! halloo, ho!

RATZMANN: Roller, Roller! Ten devils take me!

SCHWEITZER, ROLLER (offstage): Ratzmann! Schwarz! Spiegelberg!
Ratzmann!

RATZMANN: Roller! Schweitzer! Death, devils, hell, and damnation!
(running to meet them)

(Enter Robber Moor on horseback; Schweitzer, Roller, Grimm, Schufterle, and a troop of Robbers, covered with dust and dirt)

MOOR (jumping down from his horse): Freedom, freedom!—you are home and dry, Roller! Schweitzer, take my horse and wash him down with wine. (throwing himself on the ground) That was warm work!

RATZMANN (to Roller): By Pluto's fiery furnace! are you resurrected from the wheel?

SCHWARZ: Are you his ghost? or am I a fool? or is it really you?

ROLLER (recovering his breath): It is. Flesh and blood, entire.
Where do you think I've come from?

SCHWARZ: Ask the Sibyl! the judge had put on his black cap for you.

ROLLER: That he had, and that's not all. I've come express from the gallows. Just let me get my breath back. Schweitzer here will tell you. Get me a glass of brandy!—You here again too, Moritz? I thought I should be seeing you in another place—get me a glass of brandy, will you? my bones are falling apart—oh, Captain! Where's the captain?

SCHWARZ: Straightaway, straightaway!—but tell us, say! how did you get away? how have we got you again? My head is spinning. From the gallows, you say?

ROLLER (*drinking a bottle of brandy*): Ah, that's good, that warms your heart! Straight from the gallows, I tell you! There you stand gasping, and can't imagine it—I was only three steps from the blessed ladder that was going to take me up to Abraham's bosom—so near, so near! sold to the dissecting theater already, head to foot, inside and out! you could have had my life for a pinch of snuff, but I owe the captain breath, life, and liberty.

SCHWEITZER: It's a tale worth telling. The day before, we had heard from our spies that Roller was in a pretty pickle, and if the skies didn't fall in time, then the next morning at break of day—that would be today—he would have to go the way of all flesh.—“Up!” says the captain, “what won't we do for a friend. We'll save him, or if we can't save him, then at least we'll light him a funeral pyre such as no king ever had, one that will burn them black-and-blue.” The whole band turned out. We sent a fast messenger to him with a note of what we were going to do, to drop in his soup.

ROLLER: I never believed they would succeed.

SCHWEITZER: We bided our time till all the alleys were empty. All the town had gone out to see the show, on horseback and on foot and in carriages all jostling together. You could hear the din and the penitential psalm a long way off. Now, says the captain, set alight, set alight! Our fellows flew like arrows, set fire to the town in thirty-three places at once, threw down burning firebrands near the powder magazine, in the churches and the barns—by God, before a quarter of an hour was up, the northeast wind came and served us a treat—he must have had his grudge against the town too!—and helped the fire on its way to the topmost gables. And us meanwhile up and down the streets like furies—fire, fire! all through the town—shrieks and howls and rampage—the firebells start to ring, then up goes the powder magazine in the air, as if the

earth were split in two, and heaven burst, and hell sunk ten thousand fathoms deeper.

ROLLER: And now my escorts looked over their shoulders—there lay the town like Sodom and Gomorrah, the whole horizon was fire and smoke and brimstone, forty hills echoing the hellish blast all around, everyone falls to the ground in panic—I seize the opportunity, and wish! like the wind—they had untied me, we were as close to it as that—with my company staring back petrified like Lot's wife, away! through the crowds, and off! Sixty yards on and I throw off my clothes, jump into the river, swim under the water till I thought I was out of their sight. The captain ready and waiting with clothes and horses—and so I escaped. Moor, Moor! I only hope you land in such a stew, so that I can repay you in the same coin!

RATZMANN: A brute of a wish, that you deserve to be hanged for—but what a trick to pull off!

ROLLER: It was rescue in my darkest hour, you'll never know what it was like. You should have been there, with the rope round your neck, marching wide awake to the grave like me, and all their accursed rituals and hangman's ceremonies, and every tottering, frightened step nearer and nearer to the loathsome contrivance where I was going to be installed, rising in the hideous glow of the morning sun, and the hangman's assistants lurking, and the horrible music—I can still hear it ringing in my ears—and the hungry ravens croaking, thirty of them perched there on my half-rotten predecessor, and all that, all that—and the foretaste of the eternal bliss that was waiting for me too! Brother, brother! and all of a sudden, the password to freedom—a bang as if heaven had burst its hoops—listen, you vermin! I tell you, if you were to jump from the glowing furnace into icy water, you would not feel such a difference as I did when I reached the opposite bank.

SPIEGELBERG (*laughing*): Poor bastard! Now it's out of your system. (*drinks to him*) Here's to your happy resurrection!

ROLLER (*throwing his glass away*): No, by all the treasures of Mammon! I shouldn't care to live through that again. Dying is more than a harlequinade, and the fear of death is worse than dying itself.

SPIEGELBERG: And the powder magazine blown up—you see now, Ratzmann? That was why the air smelled of sulphur for miles

around, as if Moloch's privy had been aired beneath the firmament—it was a masterstroke, Captain! I envy you for it.

SCHWEITZER: If the town makes a holiday out of seeing my comrade done away with like a baited pig, why the devil should we have any qualms at setting off the town for the sake of our comrade? And on top of that, our fellows had the chance of plundering scot-free. Tell us, what did you get?

ONE OF THE BAND: I crept into St. Stephen's in the confusion and cut the gold trimmings off the altar cloth—the good Lord is a rich man, I said, and can spin gold out of old rope.

SCHWEITZER: Well done!—What is the use of that stuff in a church? They dedicate it to the Creator, who laughs at their trumpery—and his creatures go hungry—And you, Spangeler—where did you cast your net?

ANOTHER: Bügel and I raided a store and have brought enough gear for fifty of us.

A THIRD: Two golden fob watches I've spirited away, and a dozen silver spoons too.

SCHWEITZER: Good, good! And we have given them enough to keep them busy for a fortnight. If they want to put the fire out they will have to ruin the town with water.—Schufterle, didn't you hear how many dead there were?

SCHUFTERLE: Eighty-three, they say. The magazine alone blew sixty to smithereens.

MOOR (*very gravely*): Roller, your life is dearly bought.

SCHUFTERLE: Pah! what do you mean? Now if it had been men; but it was only babes in arms still dirtying their linen, wrinkled grandmothers chasing the flies from them, shriveled old stay-at-homes who couldn't find their way to the door, hypochondriacs whining for the doctor while he had gone out to follow the mob at his own solemn pace.—Everyone with a sound pair of legs had run to see the spectacle, and only the dregs of the town was left behind to mind the houses.

MOOR: Oh, the poor, miserable creatures! Children, you say, the old and the sick?—

SCHUFTERLE: Yes, the devil take them! and women in childbed, and pregnant ones afraid of aborting under the gallows, and young wives who thought the hangman's tricks might give them a shock and brand the child in their womb with a gallows mark, the poor

poets who had no shoes to put on because their only pair was at the menders', and riffraff of that kind, not worth the trouble of talking about. I happened to be going past a row of cottages there and heard a howling and peeped in, and when I took a good look, what was it? A baby, lying there as right as rain under the table, and the table just about to catch fire—Poor little brute! I said, you're freezing! and threw it into the flames—

MOOR: Did you, Schufterle? And may those flames burn in your breast till the day eternity grows gray!—Away, monster! Never let me see you in my band again! What, are you murmuring? Are you hesitating? Who can hesitate when I command? Away with him, I say—there are others among you who are ripe for my wrath. I know you, Spiegelberg. But I shall come amongst you, and terrible shall be my judgment upon you.

(Exeunt Robbers, trembling, leaving Moor alone, pacing violently up and down)

MOOR: Hear them not, avenger in heaven! How can I prevent it? How can you prevent it, when your pestilence, your famine, your floods devour the just man with the wicked? Who can command the flame, and bid it spare the hallowed crops when it shall destroy the hornets' nest? Oh shame upon the murder of children! of women! of the sick! How this deed bows my head! It has poisoned my finest works—see the boy standing there, flushed with disgrace and mocked before the eyes of heaven, he who ventured to play with Jove's thunderbolt, and hurled down pygmies when his task was to shatter titans—go, go! you are not the man to wield the highest tribunal's avenging sword, the first stroke was too much for your strength—here I renounce the impertinent plan, go to hide myself in some crevice of the earth, where the daylight shrinks before my shame. *(as if to flee)*

(Enter Robbers, in haste)

A ROBBER: Look out, Captain! The forest is alive! Whole troops of Bohemian cavalry are on the rampage.—Hell's constable must have put them up to it.

MORE ROBBERS: Captain, Captain! They have trailed us here—thousands of them are cordoning off the woods around us!

MORE ROBBERS: Help, help! They have caught us, we shall be hanged and quartered! Thousands and thousands of hussars and dragoons and scouts are riding up the hillside and have cut off our escape routes.

(Exit Moor. Enter Schweitzer, Grimm, Roller, Schwarz, Schufterle, Spiegelberg, Ratzmann, and the Robber Band)

SCHWEITZER: Have we shaken them out of their beds? Cheer up, Roller! That's what I have been waiting for for a long time, to cross swords with some of these cook-house champions—where is the captain? Is the whole band together? We have powder enough, haven't we?

RATZMANN: Powder and plenty to spare. But there are no more than eighty of us—we're scarcely one to twenty.

SCHWEITZER: All the better! and if it was fifty of them to my fingernail! Didn't they sit tight till we set fire to the straw under their arses? Brothers! brothers! there's nothing to worry about! They gamble their lives for ten kreutzers, aren't we fighting for our necks and our freedom? We shall be upon them like the flood and rain down on their heads like thunderbolts.—Where in the devil's name is the captain?

SPIEGELBERG: He has left us in our hour of need. Can't we get away?

SCHWEITZER: Get away?

SPIEGELBERG: Oh, why didn't I stay in Jerusalem!

SCHWEITZER: Why, then I hope you drown in a sewer, you miserable rat! When it's naked nuns you've enough to say for yourself, but when you see a pair of fists—coward, let us see now what you are made of, or we'll sew you into a sow's skin and set the dogs on you!

RATZMANN: The captain, the captain!

(Enter MOOR)

MOOR (*slowly, aside*): I have let them encircle us completely, now these fellows will have to fight in desperation. (*aloud*) Now, lads! Now is the time! We are lost, or we must fight like wild boars at bay.

SCHWEITZER: Ha! I'll rip their bellies with my tusks till their tripe comes bursting out by the yard! Lead on, Captain! We will follow you into the jaws of death!

MOOR: Load all weapons. There is no shortage of powder?

SCHWEITZER (*bounding up*): No, powder enough to blow the earth sky-high!

RATZMANN: Every man has five pairs of pistols loaded, every man three rifles as well.

MOOR: Good, good! And now some of you must climb the trees, or hide among the thickets, and fire at them from the rear—

SCHWEITZER: That is your place, Spiegelberg!

MOOR: The rest of us, like furies, will fall upon their flank.

SCHWEITZER: That's the place for me!

MOOR: At the same time everyone must let them hear him whistle, and move around in the woods, so that our numbers will seem more formidable; and we must let all the dogs loose, and set them amongst their ranks, to separate and spread them out and drive them into your fire. We three, Roller, Schweitzer, and I, will fight in the thick of it.

SCHWEITZER: Masterly, superb! We will beat them so that they do not know where the blows are coming from. I can shoot a cherry out of a man's mouth—just let them come!

(Schufterle tugs at Schweitzer's sleeve; Schweitzer goes on one side with the captain and speaks quietly with him)

MOOR: Silence!

SCHWEITZER: I beg you—

MOOR: Away! Let him thank his disgrace, it has saved his life. He shall not die when I and my Schweitzer die, and my Roller. Take his clothes from him, I will say he was a passerby and I robbed him.—Calm yourself, Schweitzer! I swear he will yet be hanged one day.

(Enter a Priest.)

PRIEST *(aside, taken aback)*: Is this the dragon's lair?—By your leave, gentlemen! I am a servant of the church, and out there are seventeen hundred men, set to guard every hair of my head.

SCHWEITZER: Bravo, bravo! a fine speech to keep one's belly warm.

MOOR: Silence, comrade!—Speak, Father, and be brief! What business have you with us?

PRIEST: I am sent by the authorities, whose word is life and death—you thieves—you murderous incendiaries—you scoundrels—poisonous brood of vipers, that creep in darkness, and sting where no man sees—plague upon the face of mankind—generation of hell—feast for ravens and vermin—colony for the gallows and the wheel—

SCHWEITZER: Dog! enough of your abuse, or—*(thrusting a rifle butt into his face)*

MOOR: Shame on you, Schweitzer! You have spoilt his peroration—he has learned his sermon so perfectly by heart—go on, sir!—"for the gallows and the wheel. . ."?"

PRIEST: And you, glorious Captain! Duke of cutpurses! King of villains! Great mogul of all the scoundrels under the sun! Image of that first loathsome rabble-rouser who stirred up a thousand legions of innocent angels to fiery rebellion and dragged them down with him to the pit of damnation—the accusing cries of abandoned mothers howl at your heels, blood is the water you drink, men weigh on your murderous dagger no more than a bubble of air.—

MOOR: Very true, very true! Go on!

PRIEST: What? Very true, very true? Is that your answer?

MOOR: What, sir? That was not quite what you expected? Go on, go on! What more did you have to say?

PRIEST (*heatedly*): Terrible man! get thee behind me! Does not the murdered count's blood stick to your accursed fingers? Have not you with thieving hands violated the Lord's sanctuary, and villainously seized the consecrated vessels of the sacrament? What? Did not you hurl brands of fire into our God-fearing city, and blow up its magazine over the heads of pious Christians? (*clasp-
ing his hands together*) Hideous, hideous sins that stink to high heaven and call the Last Judgment to arms, that it may break upon you! Ripe for retribution, ready for the last trumpet!

MOOR: Masterly, so far! but to the matter! What is it that the right worshipful gentlemen would have you tell me?

PRIEST: That which you are not worthy to hear!—Look about you, incendiary and murderer! As far as your eye can see, you are pinned in by our cavalry—there is no room for you to escape now—as sure as cherries will grow upon these oaks, and these pinetrees bear peaches, so surely will you turn your back upon these oaks and pines unharmed.

MOOR: Do you hear, Schweitzer?—But go on!

PRIEST: Hear then, how graciously, how patiently justice has born with your iniquities. If you will crawl upon your knees to the cross, and beg for grace and mercy, then see, severity itself will yield to pity, justice will be as a loving mother—she will turn a blind eye to the half of your crimes, and—consider!—you will only be broken on the wheel.

SCHWEITZER: Do you hear, Captain! Shall I go and squeeze this worn-out sheepdog by the throat till he sweats blood from every pore?—

ROLLER: Captain! Death, devils, and hell! Captain!—see how he chews his lip between his teeth! shall I turn the fellow upside down beneath the firmament like a ninepin?

SCHWEITZER: Me, me! Let me kneel, let me beg at your feet! Let me have the pleasure of grinding him to powder!

(Priest *cries out*)

MOOR: Leave him alone! Let no one dare to touch him! (*to the priest, drawing his sword*) Look, Father! here stand seventy-nine men, whose captain I am, and none of them will fly at a command, or dance to the music of your cannons; and out there stand seventeen hundred who have grown gray beneath their muskets—but hear me! thus says Moor, captain of murderers and incendiaries. It is true, I killed the count, I plundered the Dominican Church and set it alight, I cast firebrands into your city of bigots, I blew up the powder magazine over the heads of pious Christians—but that is not all. (*stretching out his right hand*) Look at these four precious rings that I wear, one on each finger—go and tell the worshipful gentlemen with their powers of life and death, tell them point by point, what you are about to see and hear.—This ruby I took from the finger of a minister whom I laid low at his prince's feet when he was hunting. He was a man of the common people, who had made his way by flattery to his master's highest favor—his neighbor's fall was the footstool of his exaltation—orphan's tears bore him aloft. This diamond I took from a minister of finance, who sold offices and honors to the highest bidder, and turned the sorrowing patriot away from his door. This agate I wear in honor of one of your cloth, whom I strangled with my own hands after he had lamented in the pulpit, before his congregation, that the Inquisition had declined so.—I could tell you many more stories of my rings, if it were not that I already regretted the few words I have wasted upon you—

PRIEST: O Pharaoh, Pharaoh!

MOOR: Do you hear? Did you mark him groan? Does he not stand there as if he would call down fire from heaven upon the Company of Korah* with prayer? Judging with a shrug of his shoulders, damning with a Christian sigh! Can a man be so blind? He who has Argus's hundred eyes to spy out his brother's spots, can

*“The Company of Korah” refers to the 250 men of the tribes of Levi and Reuben who were swallowed by the earth and burned to death after defying Moses and Aaron when they strayed from a prescribed form of worship (Numbers 16:1–40).

he be so blind to his own?—Gentleness and tolerance they thunder from their clouds, and offer the God of love human sacrifices like a fiery-armed Moloch—they preach the love of their neighbor, and they curse the blind octogenarian at their door—they fulminate against covetousness, and they have slaughtered Peru for the sake of golden brooches and harnessed the pagans like beasts of burden to drag their wagons—they rack their brains in wonder that nature could have brought forth a Judas Iscariot, and he is not the meanest of them who would betray God's Holy Trinity for ten pieces of silver! Oh, you Pharisees, you forgers of the truth, you apes and mockers of God! You are not ashamed to kneel before cross and altar, to flay your backs with scourges and to mortify your flesh with fasting, and you think these miserable mountebank's tricks will deceive him whom you fools yet call all-knowing—just as one mocks the great most bitterly by flattering them that they hate flatterers; you boast of your honesty and upright life, and the God who looks into your hearts would be seized with rage against the creator, if it were not He himself who created the monster of the Nile.—Take him out of my sight.

PRIEST: That the wicked can be so proud!

MOOR: Not enough!—now I will speak with pride. Go and tell the right worshipful gentleman who settle matters of life and death on the throwing of a die—I am no thief that conspires with midnight and with sleep, and plays the great man when he scales the wall—what I have done, doubtless I shall read one day in the ledgers of heaven, but with their miserable hirelings I will waste my words no more. Tell them my trade is retribution—vengeance is my calling. (*turning his back on him*)

PRIEST: So you do not seek grace and mercy? Very well, I have nothing more to say to you. (*turning to the band*) You then, listen to what I have to tell you in the name of justice!—If you will now lay hands on this condemned criminal, bind him and deliver him up, then see! you shall be spared punishment for the horrors you have committed—the memory of them shall be wiped out—Holy Mother Church will receive you once again into her loving bosom like sheep that have strayed, and to each one of you the way to rank and honor shall be open. (*smiling triumphantly*) What then! What do you say to that, Your Majesty?—Hurry then! Bind him and you are free!

MOOR: Do you hear? Do you hear him? Why do you hesitate? Do

you not know what to do? Justice offers you freedom, and you are in truth her prisoners.—She grants you your lives, and those are no empty words, for you are in truth condemned men.—She promises you rank and honor, and what can be your lot, even if you were to be victorious, other than shame and curses and persecution?—She speaks to you with heaven's voice of reconciliation, and you are in truth damned. There is not a hair upon your heads, not upon one of you, that is not destined for hell. Will you still consider? Are you still in doubt? Is it so hard to choose between heaven and hell? Will you not help them, Father!

PRIEST (*aside*): Is the fellow mad?—What, do you think perhaps it is a trap to catch you all alive? Read for yourselves, here is the general pardon, signed and sealed. (*handing Schweitzer a paper*) Can you still be in doubt?

MOOR: Look, look! What more can you ask? Signed with his own hand—mercy beyond bounds—or are you afraid they will break their word, have you heard that no faith is kept with traitors?—Oh, have no fear! Politics could make them keep their word, even if they had given it to Satan himself. Who would ever believe them again? Would they ever be able to play the trick again?—I would swear that they mean it! They know it is I who have stirred you up and embittered you, you they think are innocent. Your crimes they interpret as the errors of hasty youth. It is I alone whom they seek, I alone who must pay the penalty. Is it not so, Father?

PRIEST: What is the devil called that speaks out of him?—Yes, yes, it is so—the fellow has me spinning.

MOOR: What, still no reply? Surely you do not think you can break out by force of arms? Look about you, look about you! surely you cannot think that! such confidence would be but childish folly.—Or do you flatter ourselves, thinking to die the death of heroes, because you saw how I rejoiced at the thought of battle?—Oh, do not believe it! You are not Moor.—You are nothing but a gang of thieves! Miserable instruments of my greater designs, like the rope contemptible in the hangman's hand! Thieves cannot die the death of heroes. Life is the thief's profit, after it come terrors.—Thieves have the right to be afraid of death.—Hear how their trumpets sound! See how their threatening sabers flash! What? Still undecided? are you mad? are you out of your minds?—It is unforgivable! I will not owe my life to you, I despise your sacrifice!

PRIEST (*in astonishment*): He will drive me mad, I must fly from this place! Whoever heard such things as this?

MOOR: Or are you afraid that I will kill myself, and by my suicide invalidate the treaty that counted only while I was alive? No, children! that is an idle fear. Here I throw away my dagger, here my pistols and my phial of poison that I had in readiness—so wretched I am, I have even lost power over my own life.—What, still undecided? Or do you think I will resist if you attempt to bind me? Look! see me lash my right hand to this oak tree's branch, I am defenseless, a child can conquer me.—Who will be the first to abandon his captain in his hour of need?

ROLLER (*in furious excitement*): And if nine circles of hell surrounded us! (*brandishing his sword*) Every man who is not a dog, save your captain!

SCHWEITZER (*tearing up the pardon, and throwing the pieces in the Priest's face*): Pardon, in our bullets! Away, vermin! tell the magistrates who sent you that in Moor's band you could not find a single traitor.—Save, save the captain!

ALL (*shouting*): Save, save, save the captain!

MOOR (*tearing himself free, joyfully*): Now we are free.—Comrades! I feel an army in my fist—death or liberty!—at least they shall take none of us alive!

(*The trumpets sound the attack. Noise and tumult. Exeunt, with drawn swords*)

Act 3

Scene 1

(Amalia in her garden, playing upon the lute.)

AMALIA:

Fair as angels, full of heaven's delight,
Fairer far than other youths was he,
His gaze as Maytime sunbeams tender-bright,
Mirrored in the heavenly azure sea.

His embrace—O raging ecstasies!
Fiery hearts around each other furled,
Our lips and ears entranced—before our eyes
The night—and our two spirits heavenward whirled.

And his kiss—O taste of paradise!
As two burning flames will grasp and cling,
As two harps will join their melodies
And their heavenly harmonies will sing,

Plunging, racing, soaring, spirits bound,
Lip and cheek a-tremble and ablaze,
Soul joined with soul and heaven and earth around
The lovers lost and melted in the haze.

He is gone! alas, it is in vain
The timid sigh recalls him to our grasp!
He is gone—and life is now but pain,
All joy expiring in a dying gasp.

(Enter Franz)

FRANZ: Here again, willful dreamer? You crept away from our merry feast and spoiled our guests' pleasure.

AMALIA: I am sorry for these innocent delights! When the dirge must still be ringing in your ears that sang your father to his grave—

FRANZ: Would you mourn forever? Let the dead sleep, and make the living happy! I have come—

AMALIA: And when will you be gone again?

FRANZ: Oh, Amalia! Let me not see these black, proud looks! You grieve me. I have come to tell you—

AMALIA: I suppose I must hear that Franz von Moor has succeeded to the title.

FRANZ: Yes, I came to hear what you would say—Maximilian has been laid to rest with his forefathers. I am your lord and master. But Amalia, I would be so in every respect.—You remember what you have been to our family, Moor treated you as his daughter, his love for you lives on even after his death—can you ever forget that?

AMALIA: Never, never. Who could be so thoughtless as to drown those memories in feasting!

FRANZ: My father's love for you must be repaid to his sons, and Karl is dead—you wonder? you are giddy? Yes, truly, the thought of it is so grand, so flattering, that it must even numb a woman's pride. Franz tramples upon the hopes of the noblest young ladies in the land, Franz comes and offers his heart and his hand to a poor orphan who would be helpless without him, and with it all his gold and all his castles and forests. Franz, whom men envy and fear, comes of his own free will to declare himself Amalia's slave—

AMALIA: Why does not the lightning split the blaspheming tongue that speaks such shameful words? You, you murdered my love, and Amalia should call you husband! you—

FRANZ: Not so hasty, Your Most Gracious Highness!—It is true, Franz cannot mop and mow like a cooing Celadon before you—true, he has not learned to moan his lover's plaint to the echo of the rocks and caves like a languishing Arcadian swain—Franz speaks, and if he hears no answer, he will—command.

AMALIA: Command! You, reptile, command? command me?—and if I throw your command back in your face with scorn?

FRANZ: You will not do that. I know a way that will nicely tame your blind obstinate pride—a convent cell!

AMALIA: Bravo! excellent! in a convent cell, spared your basilisk's look forever, and with time enough to think of Karl, to cling to his memory. Welcome with your convent! Let your cell enfold me!

FRANZ: Ha! is it so!—beware! Now you have taught me the art of tormenting you—the sight of me shall scourge this everlasting fancy of Karl from your head like a fury with locks of fire, the terrifying specter of Franz shall lurk behind your lover's image like the dog in the fairy tale that lay on the underground treasure—by your hair I will drag you into the chapel with my sword in my hand, force the oath of matrimony out of your soul, take your virgin bed by storm, and conquer your proud innocence with my greater pride.

AMALIA (*striking him across the face*): Take this for your dowry!

FRANZ (*provoked*): Ha! ten times and ten times more you shall be paid back for that! Not my wife—you shall not have the honor—no, I will have you for my mistress, and honest peasant women will point their fingers at you if you dare to cross the street. Yes, gnash your teeth—spit fire and venom from your eyes—I like a woman to be angry, it makes you more beautiful, more desirable. Come—your struggling will be sauce to my triumph and spice to my pleasure when I force my embraces on you.—Come with me to my room—I am burning with desire—now, this minute you shall go with me! (*attempting to drag her off*)

AMALIA (*falling upon him*): Forgive me, Franz! (*as he is about to embrace her, she snatches his sword from his side and steps quickly back*) Look, villain, what I can do to you now! I am a woman, but a woman in desperation—once dare to lay your lustful hands upon my body—this steel shall pierce your loathsome breast, and my uncle's spirit will guide my hand! Away, this minute (*drives him away*) Ah! how good, how good—now I can breathe—I felt I was strong as a fiery steed, fierce as the tigress pursuing the triumphant robber of her cubs.—A convent, he said! Thanks, for this happy discovery! Now love betrayed has found its resting place—a convent—the Redeemer's cross is the resting place for love betrayed. (*about to go*)

(*Enter Hermann, timidly*)

HERMANN: Lady Amalia! Lady Amalia!

AMALIA: Wretch, why do you disturb me?

HERMANN: I must shed this weight from my soul before it drags me

down to hell—(*falling at her feet*) Forgive me! forgive me! I have wronged you grievously, Lady Amalia!

AMALIA: Stand up! Leave me! I do not want to hear!

HERMANN (*detaining her*): No! Stay! In God's name! In God's eternal name, you shall hear it all!

AMALIA: Not another sound—I forgive you—go home in peace! (*hurrying away*)

HERMANN: Then hear me this one word—it will give you peace again!

AMALIA (*comes back and looks at him in amazement*): What, friend!—who, what on earth or in heaven can give me peace again?

HERMANN: One single word from my lips—listen to me!

AMALIA (*seizing his hand with pity*): Good fellow—can a statement from your lips draw back the bolts of eternity?

HERMANN (*standing up*): Karl is alive!

AMALIA (*crying out*): Miserable wretch!

HERMANN: It is so—And one more thing—your uncle—

AMALIA (*rushing at him*): You are lying—

HERMANN: Your uncle—

AMALIA: Karl is alive!

HERMANN: And your uncle—

AMALIA: Karl is alive?

HERMANN: Your uncle too.—Do not betray me. (*Rushes off*)

AMALIA (*standing as if petrified, then starting up wildly and rushing after him*): Karl is alive!

Scene 2

A country scene, near the Danube.

(The Robbers, camped on rising ground beneath trees. The horses are grazing downhill.)

MOOR: Here I must lie and rest (*throwing himself on the ground*).
My limbs are shattered and my tongue is as dry as a potsherd.
(*Schweitzer creeps off unnoticed*)

I would bid you fetch me a handful of water from the river, but you are all weary unto death.

SCHWARZ: And the wine in our wineskins is no more.

MOOR: See how fair the corn stands! The trees almost breaking beneath their fruits. The vine full of promise.

GRIMM: It will be a fine harvest.

MOOR: You think so? Then one man is repaid for the sweat of his brow. One?—And yet the night may bring hail, and all may be beaten to the ground.

SCHWARZ: It may well be. All can be beaten to the ground a few hours before the reapers come.

MOOR: It is as I say. All will be beaten to nothingness. Why should a human being succeed where he imitates the ant and be thwarted where he is like the gods? Or is this the limit destined for his endeavor?

SCHWARZ: I do not know.

MOOR: Well said, and, it were better still that you should never seek to know!—Brother—I have seen men, their insect worries, and their giant designs; their godlike schemes and their mouse's scurryings, their wondrous chasing after happiness; this one trusting the leap of his horse—another, his donkey's nose—another, his own legs; this many-colored lottery of life, where so many stake their innocence, their hopes of heaven, to draw the winning number, and—blanks, blanks every one—there was no lucky number there. Brothers, a spectacle to draw tears from your eyes, just as it stirs your belly to laughter!

SCHWARZ: What a glorious sunset!

MOOR (*lost in the sight*): That is how a hero dies—Worthy of adoration!

GRIMM: You seem deeply moved.

MOOR: When I was a boy, my dearest wish was—to live like that, to die like that—(*biting back his anguish*) A foolish boy's wish!

GRIMM: I should think so!

MOOR (*pulling his hat down over his eyes*): There was a time—Leave me alone, comrades!

SCHWARZ: Moor, Moor! What, in the devil's name—? See how pale he has turned!

GRIMM: Why, confound it! what's the matter? is he sick?

MOOR: There was a time when I could not sleep at night if I had not said my prayers—

GRIMM: Have you lost your wits? Would you take lessons from when you were a boy?

MOOR (*laying his head on Grimm's breast*): Brother! brother!

GRIMM: What? look! are you a child?

MOOR: Oh, if I were—if only I were again!

GRIMM: Fie, shame!

SCHWARZ: Take courage! Look at the beauty of the landscape, see how fine the evening is!

MOOR: Yes, friends, this world is so fair.

SCHWARZ: Now, that was well-spoken!

MOOR: This earth is so glorious.

GRIMM: Yes, yes—that is what I like to hear.

MOOR (*sinking back*): And I so hideous in this fair world—and I, a monster on this glorious earth.

GRIMM: Oh, in God's name!

MOOR: My innocence! my innocence!—Look! Everyone has gone out to bask in the peaceful sunbeams of spring.—Why must I, I alone draw hell from the joys of heaven? All so happy, all kin through the spirit of peace! the whole world one family, a father there above—a father, but not mine—I alone cast out, I alone set apart from the ranks of the blessed—not for me the sweet name of child—not for me the lover's melting glance—never, never more the bosom friend's embrace. (*starting back wildly*) Set about with murderers, in the midst of hissing vipers—fettered to vice with bands of iron—rocked giddily over the abyss of destruction on the frail reed of vice—I, I alone cast out, a howling Abaddon* amidst the fair world's happy blossoms!

SCHWARZ (*to the others*): Incredible! I have never seen him like this.

MOOR (*sorrowfully*): Oh, that I might enter again into my mother's womb! Oh, that I might be born a beggar! No! I would ask for no more, oh ye heavens—than that I might be as one of those who earn their daily bread! Oh, I would labor till the blood sprang from my brow—to buy the sweet joy of a single afternoon's rest—the bliss of a single tear.

GRIMM (*to the others*): Patience! the fit will soon have left him.

MOOR: There was a time when they would flow so freely—oh, you days when I was at peace! You, my father's castle—you green

*Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803) uses the name Abaddon (German *Abbadona*) for the contrite and melancholy devil in his epic poem *Der Messias* (The Messiah) (1748–73).

dreaming valleys! Oh, Elysium of my childhood!—Will you never return! never cool my burning breast with your sweet murmurings? Mourn with me, nature.—Never, never will they return, never cool my burning breast with their sweet murmurings.—Gone! gone! gone beyond recall!—

(Enter Schweizer, with water in his hat)

SCHWEITZER: Drink your belly full, Captain—here's water in plenty, and cold as ice.

SCHWARZ: You're bleeding—what have you been doing?

SCHWEITZER: Fool, it might have cost me two broken legs—and a broken neck. There I was going along one of those sandbanks by the river, whoosh! the stuff slips away from under my feet and down I go, a good ten-foot drop—and when I'd picked myself up and got my wits back, there was the clearest water you could ask for, running between the stones. Enough of a caper for this time, I thought, this is what the captain wants.

MOOR *(giving him back his hat, and wiping his face for him)*: Let me—we do not often see the scars the cavalrymen left on your forehead, back there in Bohemia—your water was good, Schweitzer—these scars suit you well.

SCHWEITZER: Pah! there's room for thirty more!

MOOR: Yes, children—it was a warm afternoon's work—and only one man lost—my Roller died a fine death. There would be a monument on his grave if he had not died for my sake. This will have to serve *(wiping his eyes)*. How many was it of our enemies that we killed?

SCHWEITZER: A hundred and sixty hussars—ninety-three dragoons, forty or so riflemen—three hundred in all.

MOOR: Three hundred against one!—Each one of you has a claim on this head. *(baring his head)* Here I raise my dagger—as truly as my soul draws breath I swear—swear I will never forsake you.

SCHWEITZER: Do not swear! One day, you do not know! your good luck may return, and you will regret it.

MOOR: By my Roller's bones! I swear I will never forsake you!

(Enter Kosinsky)

KOSINSKY *(aside)*: Hereabouts they told me I should find him—hallo! what faces are these? Is it—might they—they are, they are! I will speak to them.

SCHWARZ: Look out! Who goes there?

KOSINSKY: Gentlemen, forgive me! I do not know, is this the right way?

MOOR: And who might we be, if it is?

KOSINSKY: Men!

SCHWEITZER: Haven't we proved it, Captain?

KOSINSKY: Men, I am seeking, who can look death in the face and let danger play about them like a charmed snake, who value freedom more than life and honor, whose very name, sweet sound to the poor and the oppressed, strikes terror in the valiant and turns the tyrant pale.

SCHWEITZER (*to the captain*): I like this lad. Listen, friend! We are the ones you are looking for.

KOSINSKY: I think you are, and I hope we shall soon be brothers.—Then you can show me the way to the man I want, your captain I mean, the great Count Moor.

SCHWEITZER (*giving him his hand, warmly*): You're a lad after my own heart!

MOOR (*coming closer*): And do you know their captain?

KOSINSKY: You are he—these features—who could look upon them and seek another? (*gazing at him for a long time*) I have always wished that I could see the man with destruction in his eye, there as he sat upon the ruins of Carthage*—now I need wish it no longer.

SCHWEITZER: This is a fine fellow!

MOOR: And what brings you to me?

KOSINSKY: Oh, Captain! my more than cruel destiny—I have been shipwrecked in the rough seas of this world, have seen my life's hopes sink beneath the ocean, and nothing left to me but the memory of what I had lost, a torment that would drive me insane if I had not sought to stifle it in distractions.

MOOR: Another with a grievance against God!—Go on.

KOSINSKY: I joined the army. Still my ill luck pursued me—I went on a journey to the East Indies, my ship ran aground on the rocks—nothing but frustrated plans! At last, I heard tell everywhere of your deeds—of your murder and arson, as they called them—and I have traveled thirty leagues firmly resolved to serve with you, if you will accept my services—I beg you, noble Captain, do not turn me away!

SCHWEITZER (*with a bound*): Hurrah, hurrah! Roller again, a thousand times over! A real assassin for our band!

*Gaius Marius (157–86 B.C.), when he was ordered to leave Africa, is said to have replied: "Tell the praetor that you have seen Gaius Marius sitting, a fugitive, amid the ruins of Carthage."

MOOR: What is your name?

KOSINSKY: Kosinsky.

MOOR: What, Kosinsky? And do you realize that you are a rash and foolish boy, taking the great step of your life as thoughtlessly as a careless girl?—This is not like throwing a ball, or bowling, as you may think.

KOSINSKY: I know what you mean—I am twenty-four years old, but I have seen swords flash, and heard bullets whistle by me.

MOOR: Indeed, young sir?—and have you only learned to fence so that you can strike down poor travelers for a few shillings, or run women through from behind? Go, go! you have run away from your governess because she threatened to whip you.

SCHWEITZER: What the devil, Captain! what are you thinking of? you'll not send this Hercules away? Doesn't he look the man to chase the Marshal of Saxony over the Ganges with a kitchen ladle?

MOOR: Because your rags and tatters of schemes have come to nothing, you come here to be a villain, a cutthroat?—Murder, boy, do you know what the word means? You could chop down poppies and go to sleep with a clear conscience, but to bear murder on your soul—

KOSINSKY: I will answer for every murder you bid me commit.

MOOR: What? are you so clever? Do you think to catch a man with your flatteries? How do you know that I never have bad dreams, or that I will not turn pale on my deathbed? What have you done already to make you think of answering for it?

KOSINSKY: Little indeed—but I have come to you, Count Moor!

MOOR: Has your tutor been telling you tales of Robin Hood?—They should clap such careless creatures in irons, and send them to the galleys—exciting your childish imagination, and infecting you with delusions of greatness? Do you itch for fame and honor? would you buy immortality with murder and arson? Be warned, ambitious youth! Murderers earn no laurels! Bandits win no triumphs with their victories—only curses, danger, death, and shame—do you not see the gallows on the hilltop there?

SPIEGELBERG (*pacing up and down in irritation*): Senseless! hideously, unforgivably stupid! that's not the way! that's not how I used to do it!

KOSINSKY: What should I fear, if I do not fear death?

MOOR: Splendid! incomparable! You learned your lessons like a

good boy, I see you know your Seneca by heart.—But my friend, fine phrases like that will not talk away the sufferings of your flesh, will never blunt the darts of your pain. Consider well, my son! (*taking him by the hand*) Let me advise you as a father—see how deep is the abyss, before you jump into it! If there is still one single joy known to you in this world—there could be moments, when you—wake up—and then—find it was too late. Here you step beyond the bounds of humanity—you must either be more than a man, or you are a devil.—Once more, my son! if one single spark of hope gleams anywhere within your life, then leave this terrible alliance which only despair can make—unless a higher wisdom founded it—we can easily be mistaken.—Believe me, a man can think it strength of mind, and yet at the last it is despair.—Believe me! Believe me! and go back, as quickly as you can.

KOSINSKY: No, there is no turning back for me. If my pleas cannot move you, then hear the story of my misfortune. After that you will thrust the dagger into my hand yourself; you will—sit round me here on the ground, and listen carefully!

MOOR: I will listen.

KOSINSKY: Let me tell you, then, that I come of a noble family in Bohemia, and through my father's early death inherited a sizable estate. My lands were like a paradise—for they contained an angel—a girl with all the charms that the bloom of youth can endow, and chaste as the light of heaven.—But why do I tell you this? it can only fall on deaf ears—you have never loved, have never been loved—

SCHWEITZER: Be still! our captain is as red as fire.

MOOR: Stop! I will hear it another time—tomorrow, soon, or—when I have seen blood.

KOSINSKY: Blood, blood—let me go on! My tale will fill your soul with blood. She was from Germany, a commoner's daughter—but the sight of her would melt any nobleman's prejudice. As shy and modest as could be, she accepted the ring from my hand, and within a few days I was to lead my Amalia to the altar.

(*Moor leaps to his feet*)

Amidst the dizziness of the joys that awaited me, in the middle of my wedding preparations, I was summoned to court by an express messenger. I presented myself. I was shown letters that I was supposed to have written, full of treasonable utterances.

I was inflamed at this wickedness—my sword was taken from me, I was thrown senseless into prison—

SCHWEITZER: And meanwhile—go on! I think I can tell what was brewing.

KOSINSKY: I lay there for a month, and did not know what was happening to me. I was afraid for my Amalia, who would be suffering the pains of death every minute on my account. At last the chief minister of the court appeared, congratulated me with honeyed words on the establishment of my innocence, read me the proclamation of my release, gave me back my sword. Now in triumph to my castle, to fly to my Amalia's arms—she was gone. At midnight they said she had been taken away, no one knew where, and had not been seen since. It flashed across my mind like lightning—away! to the city, I sound them out at court—all eyes were on me, no one would tell me anything—at last I catch sight of her through a secret grating in the palace—she threw me a note.

SCHWEITZER: Didn't I say so?

KOSINSKY: Death, hell, and devils! there it was! they had offered her the choice of seeing me die or of becoming the prince's mistress. Forced to decide between her honor and her love—she chose the second, and (*laughing*) I was saved!

SCHWEITZER: What did you do?

KOSINSKY: I stood there, thunderstruck. Blood! was my first thought, blood! my last. I run home foaming with rage, pick myself a three-edged sword, and off like a fury to the minister's house, for he, he alone was the infernal pander. I must have been seen in the street, for when I got there all the rooms were locked. I hunted, I asked for him: he was with the prince, I was told. I hurry there straightaway, they denied that they had seen anything of him. I go back, break down the doors, find him, was on the point—but then five or six of his men sprang out of hiding and robbed me of my sword.

SCHWEITZER (*stamping on the ground*): And he got off scot-free, and all your efforts were in vain?

KOSINSKY: I was arrested, charged, tried for my life, banished—do you hear?—as a mark of special consideration, banished from the country with ignominy, my estates confiscated and given to the minister. My Amalia is still in the tiger's clutches, sighing and mourning her life away, while my vengeance must go hungry and bow beneath the yoke of despotism.

SCHWEITZER (*standing up, whetting his sword*): Here is grist for our mill, Captain! Here is a fire to be lit!

MOOR (*who has been pacing up and down in violent agitation, starting suddenly, to the Robbers*): I must see her!—away! strike camp!—you shall stay with us, Kosinsky—pack up quickly!

THE ROBBERS: Where? What?

MOOR: Where? who can ask, where? (*violently, to Schweitzer*) Traitor, would you hold me back? But by every hope of heaven!—

SCHWEITZER: I, a traitor?—lead us to hell and I will follow you!

MOOR (*embracing him*): Brother of my heart! you shall follow me—she weeps, she mourns her life away. Up! away! all! to Franconia! Within the week we must be there! (*exeunt*)

Act 4

Scene 1

A country scene, by Old Moor's castle.

(Robber Moor, Kosinsky in the distance.)

MOOR: Go before and announce me. You remember everything you have to say?

KOSINSKY: You are Count Brand, from Mecklenburg, and I am your groom—have no fear, I shall play my part well enough, good-bye!
(exit)

MOOR: Soil of my fatherland, I salute you! *(he kisses the ground.)*
Sky of my fatherland! Sun of my fatherland! meadows and hills and rivers and forests! I salute you, from my heart I salute you all!—how sweet the breezes blow from the mountains of my home! with what joyous balm you greet the poor outcast! Elysium! a world of poetry! Stop, Moor! your feet tread the floor of a holy temple. *(coming closer)* See there, the swallows' nests in the castle courtyard—the little gate that leads to the garden!—and the corner by the palisade, where so often you would lie listening and mock your pursuer—and there below, the valley with its meadows, where as Alexander the hero you led your Macedonians into the battle of Arbela, and the hill hard by, where you repulsed the Persian satraps—and your victorious banner fluttered on high! *(smiling)* Those golden years of boyhood's May come to life again in an outcast's soul—Oh, you were so happy, so full of pure unclouded joy—and now—there lie the ruins of your schemes! Here you were one day to wander, a great man, dignified and renowned—here to live your boyhood once more in Amalia's blossoming children—here! here, the idol of your people—but the

enemy scowled at your plans! (*starting up*) Why did I come here? To hear like a prisoner the clanking chain wake me with a start from dreams of freedom—no, let me return to my exile and misery!—the prisoner had forgotten the light, but the dream of freedom flashed past him like the lightning in the night, leaving it darker than before. Farewell, you valleys of my fatherland! once you saw Karl the boy, and Karl the boy was a happy and fortunate boy—now you have seen the man, and he was in despair. (*he turns and goes quickly to the farthest part of the scene, where he suddenly stops, stands still, and gazes across at the castle with an expression of grief.*) Not to see her, not one glance?—And but a single wall between myself and Amalia—No! I must see her—and him—and let me be annihilated! (*turning round*) Father! father! your son is coming—away, black, reeking blood! away, fearful, hollow, convulsive stare of death! This single hour I beg of you—Amalia! father! your Karl is coming! (*he goes quickly towards the castle*)—Torment me when the daybreak comes, do not leave me when the night has fallen—torment me with dreams of horror! but do not poison this my one last joy! (*at the gate*) What feelings are these? what is it, Moor? Be a man!—Pangs of death—horror and foreboding—(*he goes in*)

Scene 2

A gallery in the Castle.

(*Enter Robber Moor and Amalia*)

AMALIA: And do you believe that you can recognize his likeness amongst these pictures?

MOOR: Oh yes, quite certainly. His image was always fresh in my memory. (*going round looking at the pictures*) This is not he.

AMALIA: Rightly guessed! This is the first count, the founder of the line, who was ennobled by Barbarossa when he served under him against the corsairs.

MOOR (*in front of the pictures*): Nor is *this* he, nor *this*—nor *that* one there—he is not among them.

AMALIA: Why, look more closely!—I thought you said you knew him—

MOOR: I should not know my own father better! He lacks that cast of gentleness about the lips that would distinguish him among thousands—it is not he.

AMALIA: You amaze me. What? Not seen him for eighteen years, and yet—

MOOR (*quickly, his face suddenly flushed*): This is he! (*he stands as if thunderstruck*)

AMALIA: A fine figure of a man!

MOOR (*gazing rapt at the portrait*): Father, father, forgive me!—Yes, a fine figure of a man!—(*wiping his eyes*) A godlike figure of a man!

AMALIA: It seems you are deeply moved to think of him.

MOOR: Oh, a fine figure of a man! and he is gone?

AMALIA: Gone! as all our purest joys must go—(*gently taking his hand*) Dear Count, there is no happiness upon this earth.

MOOR: True, very true—and can it be that you have already found out that sad truth? You cannot be twenty-three years old.

AMALIA: And I have found it out. Everything that lives, lives but to die a sorrowful death; nothing we care for, nothing we make our own, but one day we must grieve at its loss.

MOOR: And what can you have lost already?

AMALIA: Nothing. Everything. Nothing.—Shall we not go further, my Lord?

MOOR: In such haste?—Whose is that portrait on the right? I seem to read ill luck in his features.

AMALIA: The portrait on the left is the count's son, the present holder of the title—will you not come?

MOOR: But the portrait on the right?

AMALIA: Will you not see the garden?

MOOR: But the portrait on the right?—you are weeping, my Amalia?

(*Exit Amalia in haste*)

MOOR: She loves me, she loves me!—her whole being began to stir, the telltale drops flowed down her cheeks. She loves me!—Wretch, was this what you deserved? Am I not standing here like a condemned man before the fatal block? Is that the couch where at her bosom I dissolved in rapture? Are these my father's halls? (*catching the eye of his father's portrait, as if transfixed*) You, you—

Flames of fire from your eye—Curses, curses, and rejection!—Where am I? Night before my eyes—the terrors of God—I, I have killed him. (*he rushes off*)

(*Enter Franz von Moor, deep in thought*)

FRANZ: Away with this vision! away, miserable coward! why, are you are afraid, and of whom? does it not seem, these few hours that the count has trodden these floors, as if a spy of hell were creeping at my back—I ought to know him! There is something grand, something familiar in his wild sunburnt face, something that makes me tremble—and Amalia is not indifferent to him! Does she not linger upon the fellow with greedy, pining glances, of a kind of which she is otherwise so miserly?—Did I not see her let fall a few furtive tears into his wine, that he gulped down behind my back as hastily as if he would have swallowed the glass as well? Yes, I saw it, saw it in the mirror with my own two eyes. Ho there, Franz! beware! there lurks some monster pregnant with ruin! (*he stands studying Karl's portrait*) His long gooseneck—his black, fiery, flashing eyes—hmm, hmm!—his dark, overhanging, bushy eyebrows! (*with a sudden seizure*) Cunning, malicious hell! is it you who prompt me with this suspicion? It is *Karl*! Yes! all his features spring to life once more—it is he! despite his disguise—it is he! Death and damnation! (*pacing violently up and down*) Was it for this that I sacrificed my nights—leveled rocks and filled in yawning chasms—rebelled against every instinct of humanity, all for this giddy vagrant to come blundering through my cunningest coils.—Gently, gently! All that remains is child's play.—Have I not already waded up to the ears in mortal sin?—it would be folly to swim back when the shore lies so far behind me.—There can be no thought of turning back—heavenly grace itself would be reduced to beggary, and God's infinite mercy bankrupted, if all that I have incurred should be paid.—Forward then, like a man! (*he rings the bell*) Let him be coupled with his father's ghost and come, I care nothing for the dead.—Daniel! hey, Daniel!—What do you bet that they've not already stirred him up against me, too? He looks like a man with a secret.

(*Enter Daniel*)

DANIEL: What is your command, my lord?

FRANZ: Nothing. Go, fill this cup with wine, but hurry!

(*Exit Daniel*)

Just wait, old man! I will catch you, I will look you in the eye, I

will fix you so that your startled conscience will pale beneath your mask!—He shall die!—A poor workman he, who leaves a job half-finished and stands back idly watching for what will happen next.

(Enter Daniel with wine)

FRANZ: Put it down here! Look me straight in the eye! How your knees are shaking! How you tremble! Confess, old man! What have you done?

DANIEL: Nothing, your lordship, as true as God's alive, and my poor soul!

FRANZ: Drink this wine! drain it!—What? You hesitate?—Out with it, quickly! What did you put in this wine?

DANIEL: So help me God!—What? I—in the wine?

FRANZ: Poison you put in the wine! Are you not as white as a sheet? Confess, confess! Who gave it to you? The count, wasn't it, the count gave it to you?

DANIEL: The count? Mary and Jesus! the count didn't give me anything.

FRANZ *(seizing him violently)*: I will throttle you till you are blue in the face, you grizzled old liar! Nothing! And what were you doing with your heads together like that? You and he and Amalia? And what have you been whispering together? Out with it all! What were the secrets, what were the secrets he confided to you?

DANIEL: That God knows who knows everything. He didn't confide any secrets to me.

FRANZ: Will you deny it? What plots have you been hatching to get *me* out of the way? It's true, isn't it? You're going to strangle me in my sleep? Cut my throat when you are shaving me? Put poison in my wine or my chocolate? Out with it, out with it!—Send me to eternal rest with my soup? Out with it I say! I know everything!

DANIEL: Then may God help me in my hour of need, but it's nothing but the truth I'm telling you!

FRANZ: This time I will forgive you. But isn't it true he put money in your purse? He shook your hand more firmly than the custom is? Firmly, as he were greeting an old friend?

DANIEL: Never, my lord.

FRANZ: He said to you, for example, that he thought he knew you of old?—that you ought almost to recognize him? That the time would come when the scales would fall from your eyes—that—what? Are you telling me he never said such things?

DANIEL: Not a word of them.

FRANZ: That circumstances prevented him—that one often had to wear a mask to get within range of one's enemy—that he would take revenge, take the most terrible revenge?

DANIEL: Not a breath of any such thing.

FRANZ: What? Nothing at all? Think carefully—that he knew your former master well—knew him exceptionally well—that he loved him—loved him uncommonly—loved him like a son—

DANIEL: Something of the kind I do remember I heard him say.

FRANZ (*turning pale*): He did, he did, indeed? What! let me hear! He said he was my brother?

DANIEL (*taken aback*): What, your lordship? No, he didn't say that. but when the young lady took him through the gallery—I was just dusting the frames of the pictures—suddenly he stood still before the late master's portrait, as if he was thunderstruck. Her ladyship pointed to it, and said: a fine figure of a man! Yes, a fine figure of a man! he answered her, and wiped his eye as he did so.

FRANZ: Listen, Daniel! You know I have always been a good master to you, I have fed you and clothed you, I have spared you tasks that were too hard for you in your old age—

DANIEL: And may God reward you for it!—and I have always served you well.

FRANZ: That was what I was going to say. You have never refused me anything all the days of your life, for you know too well that you owe me obedience in all that I command.

DANIEL: In everything and with all my heart, as long as it's not against God and my conscience.

FRANZ: Nonsense, nonsense! Are you not ashamed? An old man, still believing in Christmas fairy tales! Away with you, Daniel! that was a foolish thought. I am your master. It is I who God and conscience will punish, if there are such things as God and conscience.

DANIEL (*clasping his hands together*): Merciful heavens!

FRANZ: By the obedience you owe me! Do you understand? By the obedience you owe me, I tell you, by tomorrow the count must no longer be in the land of the living.

DANIEL: Help, holy God! Why not?

FRANZ: By the *blind* obedience you owe me!—and I tell you, I shall depend on you.

DANIEL: On me! Help me, holy Mother of God! On me? What wrong has an old man like me done?

FRANZ: There is no time to think about it. Your fate is in my hand.

Would you sigh out the rest of your days in my deepest dungeon, where hunger will drive you to gnaw the flesh from your own bones, and burning thirst to drink your own water? Or would you rather eat your bread in peace and have a quiet old age?

DANIEL: What, Master? Peace, and a quiet old age—and a murderer?

FRANZ: Answer my question!

DANIEL: My gray hairs, my gray hairs!

FRANZ: Yes or no!

DANIEL: No!—God grant me mercy!

FRANZ (*about to go*): Good, you shall have need of it.

(*Daniel holds him back and falls on his knees before him*)

DANIEL: Mercy, my lord, have mercy!

FRANZ: Yes or no!

DANIEL: Your lordship, I am seventy-one years old today, and honored my father and mother, and never knowingly cheated anyone of a penny all the days of my life, and have stood by my faith like a true and honest man, and have served in your house for four and forty years, and look to die in peace and with a clear conscience, oh my lord, my lord! (*embracing his knees violently*) And you would rob me of my last comfort at my end, and have the sting of conscience stifle my last prayer, and have me enter the next life as an abomination in the sight of God and men.—No, no, my dear good dear gracious lord and master, you wouldn't do that, you couldn't want to do that to an old man of seventy-one.

FRANZ: Yes or no! What is this babbling?

DANIEL: I will be an even better servant from this day on, I will work my poor old fingers to the bone in your service like a common laborer, I will get up earlier, I will go to bed later—oh, and I will say a prayer for you too in the morning and in the evening, and God will not refuse to hear an old man's prayer.

FRANZ: To obey is better than sacrifice. Did you ever hear of the hangman putting on airs when he had a sentence to carry out?

DANIEL: Oh, no, no, I know! but to slaughter innocence—to—

FRANZ: Am I accountable to you? may the ax ask the executioner, why strike here and not there?—But see how patient I am—I shall reward you for the loyalty you have sworn to me.

DANIEL: But I hoped to stay a Christian man when I swore loyalty to you.

FRANZ: No contradictions! look, I will give you one more whole day

to consider! Think on it again. Happiness and misery—do you hear, do you understand? The greatest happiness—and the depths of misery! I shall perform miracles of torture.

DANIEL (*after a little reflection*): I will do it, tomorrow I will do it.
(*exit*)

FRANZ: Temptation is strong, and *he* was not born to be a martyr for his faith.—Your health then, Sir Count! It looks very much as though tomorrow morning you will be eating your hangman's breakfast!—Everything depends on how one looks at these things; and the man who does not look according to his own advantage is a fool. The father perhaps has drunk another bottle of wine, and—feels the itch; and the result is—one man more, and the man was surely the last thing to be thought of in the whole Herculean labor. Now it so happens that I feel the itch; and the result is—one man less, and surely there is more intelligence and intention in the loss than there ever was in the increase.—Is not the existence of the most of mankind largely the result of a hot July afternoon, or the tempting sight of bed linen, of the horizontal position of some sleeping kitchen nymph, or the putting out of a light? And if a man's birth is the work of an animal desire, of a mere chance, who is to think that the negation of his birth is any very important matter? A curse on the folly of our nursemaids and governesses, who corrupt our fantasy with horrific fairy tales and impress our soft brains with hideous images of judgments and punishments, so that involuntary shudders will seize a grown man's limbs with the chill of dread, bar the way to our boldest resolutions, bind our awakening reason in fetters of superstitious darkness—Murder! a whole hell full of furies swoops about the very word—nature forgot to make another man—they didn't tie the umbilical cord—the father's guts were running on his wedding night—and the whole shadow play* is gone. There was *something* and there is *nothing*—is that not just the same as: there was nothing and there is nothing and about nothing there is not a word to be said—man is born of filth, and wades a little while in filth, and makes filth, and rots away again in filth, till at the last he is no more than the muck that sticks to the soles of his great-grandson's shoes. That's the end of the song—

*A shadow play is a puppet play in which the audience can see only the shadows of the puppets on a screen.

the filthy circle of human destiny, and so it goes—a pleasant journey, brother dear! Our gouty, splenetic moralist of a conscience may chase wrinkled hags out of brothels and torture old usurers on their deathbeds—it will never get a hearing with me.
(*exit*)

Scene 3

Another room in the castle.

(*Enter Robber Moor from one side, Daniel from the other*)

MOOR (*hurriedly*): Where is the lady?

DANIEL: Your lordship! Will you permit an old man to make one request of you?

MOOR: It is granted. What do you want?

DANIEL: Nothing, and everything, only a little, and yet so much—let me kiss your hand!

MOOR: That you shall not, good old man! (*embracing him*) Would that I might call you father!

DANIEL: Your hand, your hand! I beg you.

MOOR: You shall not.

DANIEL: I must! (*he seizes Karl's hand, looks at it quickly, and falls on his knees before him*) My beloved, my precious Karl!

MOOR (*startled, but coldly and with self-control*): What are you saying, my good man? I do not understand you.

DANIEL: Yes, deny it, disguise yourself! Very well, very well! You are still my own dear good young master.—Merciful God! I am an old man, and live to see—fool that I was, straight away I should have—oh, Father in heaven! So you have come back, and the old master is under the ground, and there you are again—what a jackass I was, blind I must have been, (*beating his forehead*) not to know you the very—well, well, well! Who would have dreamed it—all that I prayed for—Christ Jesus! here he is, as large as life, in these old rooms again!

MOOR: What is this talk? Have you got up in a raging fever, or is it a part in some comedy you are rehearsing?

DANIEL: Oh for shame, for shame! It's not right to play such tricks on your old servant.—This scar! Look, you remember—Great

God, how you frightened me! I was always so fond of you, and the pain you could have caused me—you were sitting on my lap—you remember? There in the round room? You've forgotten that, haven't you—and the cuckoo clock that you liked to hear so much—think of it! the cuckoo clock's gone, smashed to smithereens—old Susie knocked it flying when she was cleaning the room—yes, that's right, there you were sitting on my lap, and called out "Horsey!" And I ran off to fetch your horsey for you—oh sweet Jesus! why did I have to run off so, old donkey that I am—and how it ran hot and cold down my back—hear the crying and shouting out there in the passageway, come running in, and there is the blood all bright, and you on the floor, with—holy mother of God! I felt as if a bucket of icy water was poured over me—but that's what happens with children, if you don't watch them all the time. Great God, if it had gone in your eye—and it was your right hand, too. As long as I live, I said, never again will I let a child get hold of a knife or a pair of scissors or anything sharp like that, I said—thanks be, my lord and lady away—yes indeed, I shall let that be a warning to me, all the days of my life, I said—My godfathers! I could have lost my position, I could, may the Lord forgive you, you godless child! but praise be! it all healed up well, but for that wicked scar.

MOOR: I do not understand a word of what you are saying.

DANIEL: Oh yes, those were the days, weren't they? Many's the cake and biscuit and sweetmeat I've tucked into your hand, you were always my favorite, and do you remember what you said, down there in the stable, when I put you on the old master's sorrel horse and let you gallop all round the great meadow? "Daniel," you said, "just wait till I'm a great man, Daniel, and you shall be my bailiff, and ride with me in my coach."—"Yes," I said and laughed, "if the good Lord give life and health, and if you're not ashamed of an old man," I said, "then I shall ask you to let me have the cottage there in the village that's been standing empty for so long, and lay in a cask of wine, and play tavernkeeper in my old age."—Yes, go on, laugh! Forgotten all about it, hadn't you, young master—don't want to know an old man, behave like a stranger, so grand—and still you're my precious young gentleman—a bit of a wild one you were, to be sure—don't take it amiss! Young blood will have its day—and it can all turn out well in the end.

MOOR (*throwing his arms around his neck*): Yes, Daniel! I'll not conceal it any longer! I am your Karl, your long-lost Karl! And what about my Amalia?

DANIEL (*beginning to weep*): Oh, that I should live to see this happy day, old sinner that I am!—and the master—God rest his soul!—wept for nothing! Down, down, old white head and weary old bones, go to your grave rejoicing! My lord and master is alive, I have seen him with my own eyes!

MOOR: And he will keep the promises he made—take this, you honest graybeard, for the sorrel horse in the stable. (*thrusts a heavy purse of money into his hand*) No, I had not forgotten you, old man.

DANIEL: Stop, what are you doing? Too much! You didn't mean it!

MOOR: Yes, I meant it, Daniel! (*Daniel is about to fall on his knees*) Stand up, tell me, what about my Amalia?

DANIEL: God reward you! God reward you! Oh, good Lord!—Your Amalia, oh, it will be the end of her, she will die of joy!

MOOR (*eagerly*): She has not forgotten me?

DANIEL: Forgotten? What talk is that? Forgotten you?—you should have been there, you should have seen her when she heard the news that you were dead, the news his lordship gave out—

MOOR: What did you say? my brother—

DANIEL: Yes, your brother, his lordship, your brother—I will tell you about it another day, when there is time—and how neatly she cut him off every time he came, day after day, paying her his compliments and wanting to make her his lady. Oh, I must go, I must go, I must tell her, bring her the news. (*going*)

MOOR: Stop, stop! she must not know, no one must know, nor my brother either—

DANIEL: Your brother? No, not he, heaven forbid that he should know, he of all people!—If he doesn't already know more than he ought to—oh, let me tell you, there are wicked people, wicked brothers, wicked masters—but for all my master's gold I wouldn't be a wicked servant—his lordship thought you were dead.

MOOR: Hmm! What are you muttering?

DANIEL (*more softly*): And to be sure, with you coming alive again so uninvited—Your brother was the late master's only heir—

MOOR: Old man! What are you mumbling between your teeth, as if some monstrous secret was on the tip of your tongue, not wanting to come out—and yet it should come out! Speak more clearly!

DANIEL: But I would rather gnaw the flesh from my old bones for hunger, and drink my own water for thirst, than earn a life of plenty by murder. (*he hurries off*)

MOOR (*starting up, after a pause of horror*): Betrayed, betrayed! it flashes upon my soul like lightning!—A villain's trickery! Heaven and hell! not you, my father! A villain's trickery! A robber, a murderer, through a villain's trickery! Slandered by him! my letters forged, intercepted—full of love his heart—oh, monstrous fool that I have been—full of love his father's heart—oh, knavery, knavery! It would have cost me a single step, it would have cost me a single tear—oh, fool, fool, fool, blind fool that I have been (*running against the wall*) I could have been happy—oh villainy, villainy! my life's happiness vilely, vilely betrayed. (*raging up and down*) A murderer, a robber through a villain's trickery!—He was not even angry. Not the thought of a curse in his heart—oh, fiend! unbelievable, creeping, loathsome fiend!

(*Enter Kosinsky*)

KOSINSKY: Captain, where are you? What is it? You want to stay here longer, I see?

MOOR: Up! Saddle the horses! Before sunset we must be over the borders.

KOSINSKY: You are joking.

MOOR (*imperiously*): Hurry, hurry! Do not hesitate, leave everything here! and let no man catch sight of you.

(*Exit Kosinsky*)

I must flee from within these walls. The slightest delay could drive me to frenzy, and he is my father's son—oh, my brother, my brother! You have made me the most miserable outcast upon earth, I have done nothing to offend you, it was not a brotherly deed.—Reap the fruits of your wickedness in peace, my presence shall no longer sour your enjoyment—but truly, it was not a brotherly deed. Let it be ever veiled in darkness, and let not death disturb it!

(*Enter Kosinsky*)

KOSINSKY: The horses are saddled, you may mount as soon as you will.

MOOR: Such haste, such haste! Why do you harry me so? Am I not to see her again?

KOSINSKY: I will unharness again straightway if you bid me; you made me run, head over heels.

MOOR: Once more! one more farewell! I must drain this poisoned bliss to the last drop, and then—stop, Kosinsky! Ten minutes more—behind, by the courtyard gate—and we will gallop away!

Scene 4

The garden.

(Amalia)

AMALIA: *You are weeping, Amalia?*—and his voice as he said it! his voice! I felt as if nature were reborn—all the happy springtimes of love awakened again in his voice! The nightingale sang as it did then—the blossoms breathed perfume as they did then—and I lay in ecstasy upon his breast. Ah, false, faithless heart! how you seek to flatter your treachery! No, no, away, flee from my soul, deceitful image!—my own, my only one, I have not broken my oath! Flee from my soul, treacherous, godless desires! in the heart where Karl reigns there is no place for mortal man.—But why, my soul, why do you seek this stranger against my will? Why does he stand so close beside the image of my own, my only one? why is he his constant companion? *You are weeping, Amalia?* Ah, I will flee him, flee him! Never shall my eye behold this stranger more!

(Moor opens the garden gate.)

AMALIA (*with a shudder*): Hark, hark! did I not hear the gate? (*she sees Moor, and springs to her feet*) He?—where?—what?—here I stand rooted and cannot flee—do not forsake me, God in heaven!—No, you shall not rob me of my Karl! My soul has not room for two divinities, and I am a mortal maid! (*taking out Karl's portrait*) O you, my Karl, be my angel to guard me against this stranger, this intruder on my love! You, you, let me gaze at you unceasing—no more these blasphemous glances at the other—(*she sits in silence, her gaze fixed upon the portrait*)

MOOR: You here, my lady?—and in sorrow?—and a tear upon this picture?—

(Amalia does not answer)

And who is the fortunate man for whose sake an angel's eye will glisten? may I see the idol of your—(*trying to see the portrait*)

AMALIA: No, yes, no!

MOOR (*starting back*): Ah!—and does he deserve such adoration?—does he deserve it?

AMALIA: If you had known him!

MOOR: I should have envied him.

AMALIA: Worshiped him, you mean!

MOOR: Ah!

AMALIA: Oh, you would have loved him so—there was so much, in his face—in his eyes—in the tone of his voice—so much like you—so much that I love—

(*Moor stands with downcast eyes*)

AMALIA: Here, where you are standing, he stood a thousand times—and beside him she who at his side forgot all heaven and earth—here his eyes feasted on the glorious scene about him—nature seemed to feel his generous, approving gaze, and to grow yet more beautiful in the approbation of her masterpiece—here he would make heavenly music, and hold an airy audience captivated—here from this bush he would pluck roses, would pluck roses for me—here he lay upon my bosom, here his burning lips touched mine, and the flowers were glad to be crushed beneath the feet of lovers—

MOOR: He is no more?

AMALIA: He sails upon stormy seas—Amalia's love sails with him—he treads the pathless sandy desert—Amalia's love makes the burning sand grow green beneath him, and the thorny bushes blossom—the noonday sun scorches his bare head, the arctic snows blister his feet, hailstorms beat about his brow, and Amalia's love soothes him in the tempest—oceans and mountains and horizons between the lovers, but their souls escape the dusty prison, and are united in the paradise of love.—You seem sorrowful, Count?

MOOR: These words of love stir my love too to life.

AMALIA (*turning pale*): What do I hear? You love another?—Alas for me, what have I said?

MOOR: She believed me dead, and was true to him she thought dead—she learned that I was alive, and would sacrifice for me the diadem of a saint. She knows that I roam an outcast, a wanderer in the desert, and her love flies through exile and desert to be with me. And her name is Amalia like yours, my lady.

AMALIA: How I envy your Amalia!

MOOR: Oh, she is an unhappy lady, she gives her love to one who is lost, and never in all eternity will she be rewarded.

AMALIA: No, no, she will be rewarded in heaven. Are we not told that there is a better world, where the sorrowful shall rejoice, and lovers recognize each other again?

MOOR: Yes, a world where all veils are rent, and love sees itself again, in terror.—Eternity is its name—my Amalia is an unhappy lady.

AMALIA: Unhappy, and she loves you?

MOOR: Unhappy because she loves me! Why, what if I were a murderer? What, my lady? What if your lover could count a man killed for each one of your kisses? Alas for my Amalia! she is an unhappy lady.

AMALIA (*joyfully, springing to her feet*): Ah! and I, I am happy! My only one is like the light of heaven itself, and heaven is grace and mercy! He could not bear to hurt the merest insect—his soul is as far from thoughts of blood as the pole of day from midnight.

(*Moor turns quickly away between the bushes, gazing fixedly into the distance*)

AMALIA (*takes her lute, plays, and sings*):

Hector, wilt thou bid farewell forever,
Now Achilles with his murd'rous quiver
Fearful vengeance for Patroclus swears?
Who will teach thy tender son to fight,
To cast his spear, and fear the Gods of right,
When thy corpse grim Xanthus downward bears?

MOOR (*takes the lute silently from her, and plays*):

Dearest wife, go, fetch the fateful lance,
Let me go—to tread—war's horrid dance—

(*he throws down the lute, and rushes off*)

Scene 5

A nearby forest: night. In the center, a dilapidated old castle.

(the Robbers encamped on the ground, singing.)

CHORUS:

Thieving, whoring, killing, fighting,
So we live from day to day,
For every one the hangman's waiting,
Let's be merry while we may.

We lead a life of liberty,
A life of merry joys,
Our lodging is the forest free,
In gale and tempest us you'll see,
The moon's our sun, my boys!
To Mercury we say our prayer,
The god of thieves, and light as air.

Today we'll be the farmer's guest,
Tomorrow the priest's so fat,
And for the next, we think it best
To let the Lord take care of that!

And every time the tale is told
Of drinking and of toasting,
We're fellows stout enough and bold
To join the enemy of old,
Who sits in hell a-roasting!

The stricken father's cries and groans,
The anguished mother's fearful moans,
The lonely bride's despairing tears,
Are joy and music to our ears!

Ha! see them twitch when their heads we lop,
Like oxen they bellow, like flies they drop,
That's a pleasure to our sight,
That's what gives our ears delight!

And when at last the tide has turned,

Then let the hangman take us,

It is but our reward we've earned,

We'll be gone before they make us.

A drop of Bacchus's juice to speed us as we go,

And up, my lads, away! and swifter than you know!

SCHWEITZER: It will soon be night, and the captain is not yet back!

RATZMANN: And he promised he'd be here with us again on the stroke of eight.

SCHWEITZER: If anything has happened to him—comrades! we'll burn the place down and kill every man, woman, and child.

SPIEGELBERG (*taking Ratzmann on one side*): A word in your ear, Ratzmann.

SCHWARZ (*to Grimm*): Shouldn't we be sending out scouts?

GRIMM: Let him be! He will come back with a prize to shame us all.

SCHWEITZER: No, I swear by hell you're wrong there! He didn't look like a man planning a trick of that kind when he left us. Have you forgotten what he told us as he led us over the heath? "Let one of you steal as much as a turnip from the field, if I find out then his head will fall on the spot—as sure as my name is Moor."—He has forbidden us to rob!

RATZMANN (*softly, to Spiegelberg*): What are you driving at? Speak plainer.

SPIEGELBERG: Hush!—I don't know what sort of a price you or I put on our freedom, straining away like oxen at a wagon, and holding forth all the time about our independence—I don't like it.

SCHWEITZER (*to Grimm*): What do you think that windbag is brewing now?

RATZMANN (*softly to Spiegelberg*): Do you mean the captain?

SPIEGELBERG: Hush, I say! He has his informers among us all the time.—Captain, did you say? Who made him our captain? Didn't he usurp a title that by rights belongs to me?—What? is that why we gamble our lives—is that why we let fortune vent her spleen on us, to count ourselves lucky at the last to be the bondsmen of a slave? Bondsmen, when we might be princes? By God, Ratzmann—I never liked it.

SCHWEITZER (*to the others*): Yes, you're a hero—good for squashing frogs with a stone.—Why, the sound of him blowing his nose would knock you flying—

SPIEGELBERG (*to Ratzmann*): Yes—and for years now I've been thinking: things will have to change. Ratzmann—if you're the

man I've always taken you for—Ratzmann—he's disappeared—half given up for lost—Ratzmann—I do believe his hour of doom has struck—what? Not a flush, not a flicker when you hear the bells of freedom ring? Have you not the spirit to take the hint?

RATZMANN: Ah, Satan! what snares are you laying for my soul?

SPIEGELBERG: Have I caught you?—Good! then follow me! I made note of which way he crept—come! Two pistols rarely miss, and then—we shall have struck the first blow! (*he is about to drag Ratzmann away with him*)

SCHWEITZER (*drawing his knife in fury*): Ha! Vermin! Just in time you remind me of the forests of Bohemia! Were not you the coward whose teeth began to chatter when they cried "The enemy is here!" That day on my soul I swore—away with you, assassin. (*stabs Spiegelberg to death*)

ROBBERS (*in agitation*): Murder! Murder! Schweitzer! Spiegelberg! Separate them!

SCHWEITZER (*throwing his knife down on the body*): There! and that is the end of you! Calm now, comrades—take no notice of him—the vermin, he was always jealous of the captain, and he hadn't a scar on his body—never mind, lads!—ah, the scoundrel! would he stab a man in the back? he, a man, in the back? Is that why we have felt the sweat glowing on our cheeks, to slink out of the world like rats? Vermin! Is that why we made our beds amidst fire and smoke, to die like rats in the end?

GRIMM: But the devil—comrade—what was it between you? The captain will be furious.

SCHWEITZER: Let me take care of that. And you, you scoundrel (*to Ratzmann*)—you were his right-hand man! Out of my sight with you—Schufterle tried that trick too, but now he is hanging there in Switzerland, as the captain prophesied he would.

(*A shot is heard*)

SCHWARZ (*jumping up*): Hark! a pistol shot!

(*Another shot is heard*)

Another! Hurrah! The captain!

GRIMM: Patience! He must fire a third shot.

(*Another shot is heard*)

SCHWARZ: It is, it is! Look out for yourself, Schweitzer—let us answer him!

(*They fire*)

(*enter Moor and Kosinsky*)

SCHWEITZER (*going to meet them*): Welcome, Captain!—I have been

a little hasty while you were away. (*leading him to the body*) You shall be judge between the two of us—he wanted to stab you in the back.

ROBBERS (*in amazement*): What? The captain?

MOOR (*gazing for a while at the body, then bursting out furiously*):

O inscrutable hand of avenging Nemesis!—was it not he who sang me the siren song?—Let this knife be consecrated to that dark spirit of retribution!—It was not you who did this, Schweitzer.

SCHWEITZER: By God! it was I who did it, and by the devil I swear it is not the worst thing I have done in my life. (*exits indignantly*)

MOOR (*reflectively*): I understand—guiding hand of heaven—I understand—the leaves are falling from the trees—and for me too it is autumn.—Take this from my sight.

(*Spiegelberg's body is removed*)

GRIMM: Give us the word, Captain—what are we to do now?

MOOR: Soon—soon all shall be accomplished.—Give me my lute.—

I have lost myself since I went in there—my lute, I say—I must nurse myself back to strength.—Leave me.

ROBBERS: It is midnight, Captain.

MOOR: But those were only tears at a play—I must hear the Roman's song, to wake my sleeping spirit once more—my lute.—Midnight, you said?

SCHWARZ: If not past already. Sleep weighs on us like lead. Three days since we closed an eye.

MOOR: What, does the balm of sleep fall even on the eyes of knaves?

Why then should I not feel it? I have never been a coward or a base fellow.—Lie down and sleep—tomorrow at daybreak we go on.

ROBBERS: Good night, Captain! (*they lie down on the ground and go to sleep*)

(*profound silence*)

MOOR (*takes up the lute and plays*):

BRUTUS

Be ye welcome, fields of peace and calm,
Where the last of Romans seeks his rest.
From Philippi* with its wild alarm
I come, with shame and anguish in my breast.

*The town where the armies of Brutus and Cassius were defeated by those of Antony and Octavian in 42 B.C., and where Cassius, and later Brutus, committed suicide. Karl's poem depicts Brutus's encounter with his victim Caesar in hell.

Cassius, where art thou? Rome is gone,
My band of brothers lying in their gore,
To death's dark gate my steps are hurried on,
The world no place for Brutus more.

CAESAR

Who is that with steps so fierce and bold
Comes to meet me from the rocks ahead?
Can it be the truth my eyes have told?
That must be a Roman's tread.
Son of Tiber—whence has come thy way?
Stands the city on her seven hills?
Often I have mourned the grievous day
That she lacks a Caesar for her ills.

BRUTUS

Ah, thou with wounds from three-and-twenty hands?
Who summoned thee from death to light?
Reel in horror, back where hell's gate stands!
Triumph not, proud mourner, in thy spite!
Upon Philippi's brazen altar smokes
The final sacrifice of freedom's blood;
While Rome upon the bier of Brutus chokes.
Brutus to Minos goes—Sink in thy flood!

CAESAR

O fatal blow that Brutus's sword should deal!
Thou also, Brutus, thou?
My son—thy father—son, didst thou not feel,
The earth entire to thee should homage vow?
Go—thou as the noblest Roman art renowned,
Since in thy father's breast thou plunged thy sword.
Go—howl it till the gate of hell resound.
Brutus the noblest Roman is renowned
Since in his father's breast he plunged his sword!
Go—for now thou knowest by what hand
I was kept on Lethe's strand;
Come, dark ferryman, leave this land!

BRUTUS

Father, stay!—Upon the earth so wide
 I have never known but one
 Fit to stand at mighty Caesar's side:
 It was he whom you called son.
 Only Caesar could have sought Rome's doom,
 Only Brutus Caesar would not fight.
 Where Brutus lives, for Caesar is no room,
 Go leftward, let me pass upon the right.

(he lays down the lute and paces up and down, deep in thought)

Who would be my surety?—All is so dark—labyrinths of confusion—no way out—no star to guide—if it were *over* with this last drawn breath—*over* like a shallow puppet play—But why this burning hunger for happiness? Why this ideal of unattained perfection? This looking to another world for what we have failed to achieve in this—when one miserable touch of this miserable object *(holding his pistol to his forehead)* will make a wise man no better than fool—a brave man no better than a coward—a noble man no better than a rogue? There is such divine harmony in the world of inanimate nature, why such discord in the world of reason?—No! no! there is something more, for I have not yet known happiness.

Do you think that I shall tremble? Spirits of my slaughtered victims! I will not tremble. *(trembling violently)* The terror of your dying moans—the blackness of your strangled faces—the hideous gaping of your wounds are but links in an unending chain of fate, and depend at the last on my idle moments, on the whims of my tutors and nursemaids, on my father's temperament and my mother's blood—*(shuddering)* Why not did my Perillus make a brazen bull of me, to roast mankind in my glowing belly?* *(he aims the pistol)*

Time and eternity—linked together by a single moment!—O thou fearful key that will lock the prison of life behind me, and unbar before me the dwelling of eternal night—tell me—tell me—where, oh where wilt thou lead me?—Strange, undiscovered country!—See, mankind grows weak before such visions, the

*In the fifth century B.C., Perillus of Agrigentum, in Sicily, fashioned a bull in which humans could be cremated.

tensile force of finitude is relaxed, and fancy, willful ape of our senses, spins strange shadows to deceive our credulous mind.—No, no! A man must not stumble—be what thou wilt, nameless *beyond*—if but my own self to me is true—be what thou wilt, let me only take *myself* with me—externals are but the varnish upon a man—I am my heaven and my hell. If Thou wouldst leave me nothing but some smoking desert banished from Thy sight, where lonely night and everlasting desolation all I might behold?—Then I would people the silent emptiness with my imagination, and should have all eternity to pick apart the tangled webs of universal misery.—Or wilt Thou lead me born and reborn again, through ever-changing scenes of misery step-by-step—to utter destruction? Can I not snap the threads of life that are woven for me there beyond as easily as this present one?—You can make of me—nothing; of this freedom you cannot rob me. (*he loads the pistol. Suddenly he pauses*) And am I to die out of a fear of suffering? Am I to grant misery this victory over me?—No! I will endure it! (*throwing the pistol away*) Let suffering yield before my pride! It shall be accomplished!

(*the darkness deepens. Enter Hermann through the forest*)

HERMANN: Hark, hark! fearful the owl's cry—twelve has struck in the village beyond—all is well, all is well—villainy sleeps—no spies listening in this wilderness. (*he comes to the ruined castle and knocks*) Come out, man of sorrows, dungeon dweller! Your meal is ready.

MOOR (*drawing back quietly*): What can this mean?

A VOICE (*from the tower*): Who knocks? Ho, Hermann, my raven, is it you?

HERMANN: I, Hermann, your raven. Climb up to the grating and eat. (*owls hoot*)

A dreary song they sing, the companions of your sleep.—Is it good, old man?

THE VOICE: I was much hungered.—Thanks be to thee, sender of ravens, for this bread in the wilderness!—And what news of my dear child, Hermann?

HERMANN: Silence—hark—a sound like snoring! can you not hear it?

VOICE: What? can you hear something?

HERMANN: The wind sighing in the crannies of your prison—a

lullaby to make your teeth chatter and your nails turn blue.—But hark again—I keep thinking that I hear men snoring—you have company, old man!—oh, oh!

VOICE: Can you see anything?

HERMANN: Fare you well—fare you well—a fearful place is this—down into the hole—above, on high your help and your avenger—accursed son! (*fleeing*)

MOOR (*emerging, with horror*): Stand!

HERMANN (*cries out*): Ah!

MOOR: Stand, I say!

HERMANN: Mercy! mercy! mercy! now all is betrayed!

MOOR: Stand! Speak! Who are you? What business have you here? Speak!

HERMANN: Have pity, have pity on me, gracious Master—hear one word before you kill me.

MOOR (*drawing his sword*): What am I to hear?

HERMANN: I know you forbade me on pain of death—I could not help—I could do nothing else—a God in heaven—your own father there—I took pity—strike me down!

MOOR: Here is some mystery—out with it! Speak! I will hear everything.

THE VOICE (*from the ruin*): Alas, alas! Is it you, Hermann, speaking there? Who is it you are speaking to?

MOOR: Someone drawn there too—what is happening here? (*running up to the castle*) Is it some captive men have cast aside?—I will release his chains.—Voice! again! Where is the door?

HERMANN: O have mercy, my Lord—do not press further, my Lord—for pity's sake, go by on the other side! (*blocking his way*)

MOOR: A fourfold lock! Away!—It must out.—Now for the first time, tricks of the thief's trade, come to my assistance. (*he takes housebreaking instruments and forces the lock of the grating. From below an Old Man emerges, emaciated like a skeleton*)

OLD MAN: Have pity on a miserable wretch! Have pity!

MOOR (*starting back in terror*): That is my father's voice!

OLD MOOR: Thanks be to you, O God! The hour of my deliverance is come.

MOOR: Spirit of Count Moor! What has disturbed you in your grave? Did you take a sin with you into the other world that has barred you entry to the gates of paradise? I will have masses read that shall speed the wandering spirit to its home. Did you take the

gold of widows and orphans and bury it in the earth to drive you howling from your resting place at this midnight hour—then I will tear the buried treasure from the enchanted dragon's claws, and if he should vomit a thousand crimson flames upon me and bare his pointed teeth against my sword—or have you come at my request, to answer the riddles of eternity? Speak, speak! I am no man to pale with fear.

OLD MOOR: I am not a spirit—touch me, I live, oh, a life of misery and wretchedness!

MOOR: What? Were you not buried?

OLD MOOR: I was buried—that is to say, a dead dog is lying in the vault of my fathers; and I—for three months and more I have lain languishing in this dark underground chamber, with not a glimmer of light, with not a breath of warm air, with not a friend to visit me, with the croak of wild ravens about me and the hoot of owls at midnight.

MOOR: Heaven and earth! Who could do such a thing?

OLD MOOR: Do not curse him!—It was my son Franz who did it.

MOOR: Franz? Franz?—oh, everlasting chaos!

OLD MOOR: If you are a man, and have the heart of a man, oh my unknown deliverer, then hear, hear a father's sorrow, the sorrow his sons have brought upon him—for three months I have cried it to these unhearing rocky walls, but there was only a hollow echo to mock my lamentations. And so, if you are a man, and have the heart of a man—

MOOR: A challenge to bring the wild beasts from their lairs!

OLD MOOR: There I lay upon my sickbed, and had scarcely begun to recover my strength after my grave illness, when they brought a man to me who told me my firstborn was dead on the field of battle, and with him brought a sword stained with his blood, and his last farewell, and that it was my curse that had driven him to battle and death and despair.

MOOR (*turning away with a violent movement*): It is revealed!

OLD MOOR: Hear me further! I fell into a swoon at the message. They must have thought I was dead, for when I came to my senses again, I was lying in my coffin and wrapped in my shroud like a dead man. I scratched at the lid of the coffin, and it was opened. It was the dead of night; my son Franz stood before me.—“What?” he cried, in a terrible voice, “Will you live forever?”—and straightway the lid was slammed shut again. The thunder of those words

had robbed me of my senses; when I awoke once more I felt the coffin being lifted up and taken in a carriage, half an hour's journey. At last it was opened—I found myself at the entrance to this dungeon, my son before me, and the man who had brought me Karl's sword with his blood—ten times I clasped his knees, and pleaded and implored him—his father's pleadings did not touch his heart.—“Down with him, the bag of bones!” his lips thundered. “He has lived for long enough,” and down I was thrust without pity, and my son Franz locked the door behind me.

MOOR: It is not possible, not possible! You must have been mistaken.

OLD MOOR: I may have been mistaken. Hear me further, but do not be angry! So I lay for a day and a night, and no man thought of me in my need. Nor did any man set foot in this wilderness, for the story goes that in these ruins the ghosts of my forefathers drag their rattling chains, and make deathly moan at midnight. At last I heard the door open again, this man brought me bread and water, and told me that I had been condemned to die of hunger, and that his life would be in danger if it were known that he was feeding me. And so I have clung feebly to life these many days, but the unrelenting cold—the foul air of my own filth—the boundless grief—my strength ebbed from me, my body withered, a thousand times with tears in my eyes I pleaded with God for death, but the measure of my punishment cannot yet be accomplished—or some joy must yet await me, that I have been so miraculously preserved. But my sufferings are earned—my Karl, my Karl!—and there was not a gray hair upon his head.

MOOR: It is enough. Up, you blocks, you lumps of ice! you dull unfeeling sleepers! Up! will none of you awake? (*he fires a pistol shot over the sleeping robbers' heads*)

THE ROBBERS (*aroused*): Ho! hallo! hallo! What is it?

MOOR: Did not this tale stir you in your slumbers? sleep everlasting had roused to wakefulness! Look, look! the laws of creation are made a game of dice, the bonds of nature are rent asunder, the ancient strife is let loose, the son has struck his father dead.

THE ROBBERS: What is the captain saying?

MOOR: No, not struck him dead! the words are too kind! A thousand times the son has racked his father, flayed him, spitted him, broken him upon the wheel! no, these are words of men—has done what makes sin blush, what makes the cannibal shud-

der, what no devil in eons could conceive.—His own son, his father—oh see, see, he has fallen in a swoon—his son, his own father, here in this dungeon he—cold—nakedness—hunger—thirst—oh look, oh see—he is my own father, it is the truth.

THE ROBBERS (*running and gathering round the old man*): Your father? your father?

SCHWEITZER (*approaches reverently and falls down before him*): Father of my captain! I kiss your feet! my dagger is yours to command.

MOOR: Vengeance, vengeance, vengeance shall be yours! venerable old man, so offended, so profaned! Thus from this moment I rend forever the band of brotherhood. (*rending his garment from top to bottom*) Thus I curse every drop of brother's blood before the face of heaven! Hear me, moon and stars! Hear me, midnight heavens! who look down upon this deed of shame! Hear me, thrice-terrible God, You who reign above the moon and sit in judgment and retribution above the stars, and flame with fire above the night! Here I kneel—here I stretch forth my three fingers in the horror of the night—here I swear, and may nature spew me forth from her creation like a venomous beast if I break this oath, swear never to greet the light of day again, until the blood of my father's murderer, spilt before these stones, shall smoke beneath the sun. (*standing up*)

THE ROBBERS: The very devil! Call us villains! No, in Belial's name! we never did the like of this!

MOOR: Yes! and by the fearful groans of all who ever died beneath your daggers, of those my flames consumed and those my falling tower crushed—no thought of murder or robbery shall find its place within your breasts, till all your garments are stained scarlet with the reprobate's blood—did you ever dream that you were the arm of a greater majesty? the tangled knot of our destinies is unraveled! Today, today an invisible power has conferred nobility upon our handiwork! Bow down in adoration before him who decreed you this sublime fate, who led you to this place, who deemed you worthy to be the terrible angels of his dark judgment! Uncover your heads! Kneel in the dust, that you may stand up sanctified!

(*they kneel*)

SCHWEITZER: Your command, Captain! what are we to do?

MOOR: Stand up, Schweitzer! and touch those hallowed locks! (*he*

leads him to his father, and makes him hold a lock of his hair) Do you remember how you split the skull of that Bohemian cavalryman, just as he was raising his saber over my head, and I had sunk to my knees, breathless and exhausted from my work? I promised you then that you should have a kingly reward, but till this moment I could not pay my debt.—

SCHWEITZER: You swore it, it is true, but let me not claim that debt from you in all eternity!

MOOR: No, I will pay it now. Schweitzer, no mortal man till this day was so honored.—Be my father's avenger!

SCHWEITZER (*standing up*): My great Captain! Today you make me proud for the first time! Your command! Where, when, how shall he be struck down?

MOOR: Minutes are precious, you must hurry now—choose the worthiest men of our band, and lead them straight to the count's castle! Snatch him from his bed if he is asleep or lying in the arms of pleasure, drag him from table if he is gorged, tear him from the crucifix if you find him on his knees in prayer! But I tell you, and make no mistake of this! I do not want him dead! Scratch his skin, or harm one hair of his head, and I will tear your flesh in pieces, and cast it to the hungry vultures for food! Alive and whole I must have him, and if you bring him to me alive and whole, you shall have a million for your reward, I will steal it from a king at the risk of my own life, and you shall go as free as the air.—If you understand me, hurry!

SCHWEITZER: Enough, Captain—here is my hand on it: either you shall see the two of us return, or neither. Schweitzer's angel of death is approaching! (*exit, with a troop of robbers*)

MOOR: You others, disperse in the woods—I shall remain.

Act 5

Scene 1

A long vista of rooms—a dark night.

(Enter Daniel with a lantern and a bundle.)

DANIEL: Good-bye, dear old home—so much joy and happiness I've seen here, when the good old master was still alive—tears on your moldering bones! To ask such a thing of an old and faithful servant—it was a refuge for every orphan, and a haven for all with no one to care for them, and this son has made it a den of murderers.—Good-bye, old floor! How many times Daniel has swept you—good-bye, old stove, it's hard for Daniel to take his leave after all these years—everything so familiar—it will be painful, faithful old Eliezer*—But may God in his mercy protect me from the snares and wiles of the Evil One—Empty-handed I came—empty-handed I go—but my soul is saved.

(as he is about to go, Franz rushes in, in his dressing gown)

DANIEL: God be with me! The master! *(blowing out his lantern)*

FRANZ: Betrayed! betrayed! Spirits spewed from their graves—roused from eternal sleep the kingdom of the death cries to my face
Murder! murderer!—Who's there?

DANIEL *(nervously)*: Holy Mother of God! Is it you, my Lord, screaming through the passages so horribly that everyone starts from their sleep?

FRANZ: Sleep? Who bade you sleep? Off with you, and bring a light!
(Exit Daniel. Enter another Servant)

No one is to sleep tonight. Do you hear? Everyone must be up,

*The Eliezer to whom Daniel alludes is probably Abraham's steward, mentioned in Genesis 15:2.

and armed—all weapons loaded.—Did you see them, there, along the gallery?

SERVANT: Who, your lordship?

FRANZ: Who, you fool, who? So coldly, so emptily you ask who? Why, it took hold of me like a fit! Who, you mule, who? Spirits and devils! How far on is the night?

SERVANT: The watchman has just called two o'clock.

FRANZ: What? will this night last till the Day of Judgment? Did you not hear a tumult close at hand? No shouts of triumph? No galloping horses' hooves? Where is Ka—I mean the count?

SERVANT: I don't know, Master!

FRANZ: You don't know? You are one of them as well? I will kick your heart out from between your ribs! You with your accursed *I don't know!* Be off, and fetch the pastor!

SERVANT: My Lord!

FRANZ: Do you grumble? do you hesitate?

(Exit Servant, *hurriedly*)

What? Rogues and beggars conspired against me, too? Heaven, hell, all conspired against me?

DANIEL (*coming with a light*): Master—

FRANZ: No! I shall not tremble! It was nothing but a dream. The dead are not yet risen—who says that I am pale and trembling? I feel quite well, quite calm.

DANIEL: You are as pale as death, and your voice is quaking with fear.

FRANZ: I have a fever. Tell the pastor when he comes that I have a fever. I will have myself bled tomorrow, tell the pastor.

DANIEL: Shall I bring you some drops of balsam and sugar?

FRANZ: Some drops of balsam and sugar! The pastor will not be here for a little while. My voice is weak and quaking, yes, balsam and sugar!

DANIEL: Give me the keys, so that I can go and open the cupboard—

FRANZ: No, no, no! Stay! Or I shall go with you. You see, I cannot bear to be alone! How easily I might—you see—faint, if I am alone. No, let me be, let me be! It will pass, you must stay.

DANIEL: Oh, you are sick, in earnest.

FRANZ: Yes, of course, of course! That is all.—And sickness turns the brain, and hatches strange fantastic dreams—but dreams mean nothing, Daniel, do they? Dreams come from the belly, and

dreams mean nothing—why, just now I had a merry dream—(*he collapses in a faint*)

DANIEL: In the name of Jesus, what is this? George! Conrad! Sebastian! Martin! don't just lie there! (*shaking him*) Oh, Joseph and Mary Magdalene! Can you not be sensible? They will say I murdered him, God have pity on me!

FRANZ (*in confusion*): Away—away! Why do you shake me like that, you hideous death's head?—The dead are not yet risen—

DANIEL: Oh, everlasting mercy! He is out of his mind.

FRANZ (*raising himself feebly*): Where am I?—You, Daniel? What have I been saying? Take no notice! I was lying, whatever it was—come, help me up!—it was nothing but a fit of giddiness—because—I did not sleep properly.

DANIEL: If only Johann was here! I will call for help, I will send for a doctor.

FRANZ: Stay! sit here beside me on this sofa—there—you are a sensible man, a good man. Let me tell you about it!

DANIEL: Not now, another time! I will put you to bed, rest will be better for you.

FRANZ: No, I beg you, let me tell you about it, and make fun of me!—See, I dreamed I had feasted like a king, and my heart was merry within me, and I lay drunken amidst the lawns of the castle gardens, and suddenly—it was the middle of the day—suddenly—but I tell you, make fun of me!

DANIEL: Suddenly?

FRANZ: Suddenly a fearful thunderclap struck my slumbering ear, shuddering I leaped up, and behold, I thought I saw the whole horizon stand ablaze with fiery flames, and mountains and cities and forests melted like wax in a furnace, and a howling whirlwind swept away the sea and the earth and the sky—and a voice rang out as of a brazen trumpet: "Earth, give up thy dead, give up thy dead, O sea!" and the bare ground was in labor, and began to cast up skulls and ribs and jaws and all manner of bones that joined together and made bodies of men, and they gathered in a great stream, more than the eye could see, a living torrent! Then I looked up, and behold, I stood at the foot of Sinai, the mountain of thunder, and a throng above me and below, and on the summit of the mountain upon three smoking thrones three men before whose glance all creatures fled—

DANIEL: That is the very image of the Day of Judgment.

FRANZ: Yes! the fantasies of a madman! Then there came forth one who was like the starry night, and he had in his hand a signet of iron, and he held it between the place of sunrise and of sunset and spoke: "Everlasting, holy, just, and incorruptible! There is but one truth and there is but one virtue! Woe, woe, woe to the creature that still dwells in doubt!"—Then there came forth another, who had in his hand a looking glass, and he held it between the place of sunrise and of sunset and spoke: "This glass is truth; masks and hypocrisy shall be no more."—Then I was afraid, and all the people, for we saw the faces of serpents and tigers and leopards in the terrible glass reflected.—Then there came forth a third, who had in his hand a balance of brass, and he held it between the place of sunrise and sunset and spoke: "Come forth, ye generation of Adam—for I shall weigh your thoughts in the balance of my wrath! and your works with the weight of my anger!"

DANIEL: God have mercy on me!

FRANZ: All stood as white as death, and each breast beat with fearful expectation. Then it was as if I heard my name named first in the thunder of the mountain, and the marrow of my bones froze, and my teeth chattered aloud. Then straightway the balance began to ring, and the rocks to thunder, and the hours went by, one by one, by the scale that hung on the left, and each one after the other cast in a deadly sin—

DANIEL: Oh, may God forgive you!

FRANZ: But He did not!—And the scale was piled high like a mountain, but the other filled with the blood of atonement kept it up still in the air—at the last there came an old man, bent double with grief, his own arm gnawed in his hunger, all eyes were cast down in awe before him, I knew that man, he cut a lock from the silvery hairs of his head, and cast it upon the scale of sins, and lo! it sank, sank suddenly into the pit, and the scale of atonement flew up aloft!—Then I heard a voice that spoke from the fiery rocks: "Forgiveness, forgiveness for every sinner upon earth and in the pit! thou only art cast out!" (*pause, profound silence*) Well, why do you not laugh?

DANIEL: How can I laugh, when you make my flesh creep? Dreams come from God.

FRANZ: Pah, nonsense! do not say that! Tell me that I am a fool, a crazy senseless fool! Say so, good Daniel, I beg of you, mock me!

DANIEL: Dreams come from God. I will pray for you.

FRANZ: It is a lie, I say.—go this instant, hurry, run, see where the pastor is, tell him to make haste, haste, but I tell you, it is a lie.

DANIEL: God be merciful to you! (*exit*)

FRANZ: Peasant's wisdom, peasant's fears!—No one has yet discovered whether the past is not past, or whether there is an eye watching beyond the stars—hmm! Who prompted me to such thoughts? Is there an Avenger there beyond the stars?—No, no! Yes, yes! I hear a fearful hissing about me: there is a Judge beyond the stars! To go this very night to face the Avenger beyond the stars! No, I say!—a miserable corner where your cowardice seeks to hide—empty, desolate it is beyond the stars, and none to hear you—but if there should be something more? No, no, there is not! I command it not to be!—but if it were? Woe to you if all has been accounted! if it should be counted up before you this very night!—why do my bones shiver?—To die!—why does the word catch my throat so? To answer for myself to the Avenger beyond the stars—and if He is just, the widows and the orphans, the tortured and the oppressed cry out to Him, and if He is just?—Why did they suffer? for what did you triumph over them?

(*Enter Pastor Moser*)

MOSER: You sent for me, my lord. I am astonished. The first time in my life! Do you have it in mind to make mock of religion, or are you beginning to tremble at its message?

FRANZ: To mock or to tremble, according to how you answer me.—Listen, Moser, I will show you that you are a fool, or that you are making a fool of the whole world, and you shall answer me. Do you hear? By your life you shall answer me.

MOSER: It is One greater than I to whom you issue your summons; one day He will surely give you your answer.

FRANZ: Now I will have it, now! this instant, so that I do not commit a shameful folly and call on the peasants' idol in my desperation, so often I have shouted and laughed to you as the wine flowed: There is no God!—Now I am talking to you in earnest, I tell you, there is none! and you are to muster all the arguments you have at your command, but I shall blow them away with the breath of my lips.

MOSER: But if you could so easily blow away the thunder that will fall on your proud soul with a weight like ten thousand tons! that all-seeing God whom you, fool and villain, would banish from the

midst of His creation, has no need of justification from the lips of common dust. For His greatness is as surely seen in your tyrannies as in any smile of triumphant virtue.

FRANZ: Very good, Priest! I like you like this.

MOSER: I stand here in the name of a greater master and speak with one a mere worm like myself, and have no business to be liked. Indeed I should have to be able to work miracles to wring confession from your obstinate wickedness—but if your convictions are so firm, why did you send for me? Tell me this—why did you send for me, at this hour of midnight?

FRANZ: Because I am bored and can find no pleasure at the chessboard. I want to amuse myself with a little priest baiting. You will not unman my courage with your empty terrors. I know very well that those who have come off badly in this life put their trust in eternity; but they will find themselves horribly cheated. I have always read that our being is but a motion of the blood, and when the last drop of blood has ebbed, with it go mind and spirit too. They suffer all the infirmities of our body, will not they also cease when it is destroyed? go up in vapor as it rots? Let a drop of water find its way into your brain, and your life makes a sudden pause, and that pause is like the end of being, and its continuation is death. Our sensibility is the vibration of certain chords—and a broken instrument will sound no more. If I have my seven palaces demolished, if I smash this Venus to pieces, then symmetry and beauty have ceased to exist. Look! there is your immortal soul for you!

MOSER: That is your philosophy of despair. But your own heart, which beats with anxious dread against your ribs even as you utter your proofs, gives the lie to them. These spiders' webs of systems can be torn to pieces with the single word: you must die!—I challenge you, that shall be the proof. If you still stand firm in death, if your principles do not desert you even then, then the victory is yours; but if in the hour of death you feel but the slightest qualm, then woe unto you! you have been deceived.

FRANZ (*in confusion*): If in the hour of death I feel a qualm—?

MOSER: Oh, I have seen many such wretches, who until that moment had defied the truth like giants, but in death their delusions fluttered away. I will stand by your bedside when you are dying—I should so like to see a tyrant die—I will stand there and look you straight in the eye when the doctor takes your cold, damp hand

and can scarcely feel the limping, dwindling pulse, and with that fearful shrug of his shoulders looks up and says: "Mortal assistance is in vain!" Then beware, oh then beware, that you do not look like a Nero or a Richard!*

FRANZ: No, no!

MOSER: Even this no will then be turned into a howl of yes—a tribunal within, that your skeptical speculations will not be able to silence, will then awake and sit in judgment upon you. But it will be an awakening as of one buried alive in the bowels of the churchyard, it will be a reluctant stirring—like that of the suicide who repents after the fatal stroke; it will be a flash of lightning that illuminates the midnight of your life, it will be a revelation, and if you still stand firm, then you will have won!

FRANZ (*pacing up and down in agitation*): Priest's gossip, priest's gossip!

MOSER: Now for the first time the sword of eternity will cut through your soul, and now for the first time it will be too late.—The thought of God will arouse a fearful neighbor who is called the Judge. Moor, the lives of thousands hang upon your fingertips, and of each of those thousands nine hundred and ninety-nine you have made a misery. You would have been a Nero in the days of ancient Rome, in Peru a Pizarro. And now do you suppose that God will allow one man to dwell in His creation like a raging demon, and turn His works to nothing? Do you suppose that those nine hundred and ninety-nine were only there to be destroyed, puppets only for your devilish play? Oh, do not believe it! Every minute of theirs that you have murdered, every joy that you have poisoned, every perfection that you have kept from them, shall be demanded of you then, and if you can answer, Moor, then you will have won.

FRANZ: No more! not a word more! am I to be at the mercy of your liverish fancies?

MOSER: See, the destinies of men are held in a balance, fearful but beautiful to behold. Where the scale of this life falls, the scale of that will rise; where this rises, that will sink to the ground. But that which here was but temporal affliction will there be made eternal triumph, that which here was mortal triumph will there be made everlasting despair.

*Shakespeare's Richard III, who in act 5 sees the ghosts of the people he has killed.

FRANZ (*rushing at him furiously*): May the thunder strike you dumb, lying spirit! I will tear out your accursed tongue by the roots!

MOSER: Do you feel the weight of truth so soon? But I have said nothing of proof as yet. Let me come to the proofs—

FRANZ: Be silent, go to hell with your proofs! The soul is annihilated, I tell you, I will hear no more of it!

MOSER: So the spirits of the pit do whimper, but He in Heaven shakes His head. Do you think you can escape the arm of His retribution in the empty realm of nothingness? ascend up into heaven, and He is there! make your bed in hell, and He is there! say to the night: hide me! and to the darkness: cover me! but the darkness shall be made bright round about you, and the midnight shall be day about the damned—but your immortal spirit will refuse to hear the word, and shall be victorious over the blind thought.

FRANZ: But I will not be immortal—let those who will live forever, I will not seek to hinder it! But I will compel him to annihilate me, I will provoke him to rage, that in his rage he will annihilate me. Tell me, what is the greatest sin, the sin that stirs him to the greatest wrath?

MOSER: I know but two. But they are not such as men commit, nor even dream of.

FRANZ: These two!—

MOSER (*with a weight of meaning*): Parricide the one is called, fratricide the other—But why do you suddenly turn so pale?

FRANZ: What did you say, old man? Are you in league with heaven or with hell? Who told you that?

MOSER: Woe unto him who has both upon his conscience! Better it were for him that he had never been born! But be at ease, you have neither father nor brother more!

FRANZ: Aha!—what, you know of none greater? Think again—death, heaven, eternity, damnation hang upon your lips—none greater than these?

MOSER: None greater than these.

FRANZ (*collapsing into a chair*): Annihilation! annihilation!

MOSER: Rejoice, rejoice and be glad!—for all your abominations, you are still a saint compared with the parricide. The curse that will light upon you, compared with that awaiting him, is a song of love—the retribution—

FRANZ (*leaping up*): Away! may a thousand catacombs swallow you up, screech owl! who sent for you? go, I say, or I will run you through and through!

MOSER: Can priest's gossip put a philosopher in such a rage? Blow it away with the breath of your lips! (*exit*)

(*Franz writhes on his chair in fearful convulsions. Profound silence. Enter a Servant, in haste*)

SERVANT: Amalia has flown, the count has suddenly disappeared. (*Enter Daniel, terrified*)

DANIEL: Your Lordship, a troop of fiery horsemen galloping down the hill, crying murder, murder—the whole village is aroused.

FRANZ: Go and have all the bells rung at once, get everyone to church—on their knees, everyone—they must pray for me—all the prisoners shall be freed—at liberty—the poor shall have their goods restored, everything twice, thrice over, I will—I will—go, go, call the confessor to bless my sins away, are you not gone yet? (*The tumult becomes more audible*)

DANIEL: God have mercy on me, sinner that I am! How am I to make sense of this? You've always refused to hear a word of the comfort of prayer, thrown Bible and prayer book at my head so often when you caught me praying—

FRANZ: No more of that—To die! You see? Die? It will be too late. (*Schweitzer is heard making a furious noise*)

Pray, I tell you, pray!

DANIEL: I always told you—you can be so scornful of the comfort of prayer—but look out, look out! when your hour of need is come, when the waters rise about your soul, you will give all the treasures of this world for a whisper of Christian prayer.—Do you see? You cursed at me, but now do you see?

FRANZ (*embracing him wildly*): Forgive me! Daniel, dear, good, precious, golden Daniel, forgive me! I will clothe you from head to foot—will you not pray—I will make you a bridegroom—I will—will you not pray—I beseech you—in the devil's name! will you not pray!

(*Tumult in the street outside, cries, knocking*)

SCHWEITZER (*in the street*): Take them by storm! Kill them! Break the doors down! I can see a light! he must be there.

FRANZ (*on his knees*): Hear me pray, O God in Heaven!—It is the first time—and shall never happen again—hear me, God in heaven!

DANIEL: Mercy, what are you saying? That is a godless prayer!

PEOPLE (*rushing in*): Robbers! murderers! who is it making such a din at midnight?

SCHWEITZER (*still outside*): Push them aside, comrade—it's the devil come to fetch your master—where are Schwarz and his band?—Surround the castle, Grimm—storm the walls!

GRIMM: Brands and torches here—it's us up or him down—I will set his rooms alight.

FRANZ (*praying*): Lord God, I have been no common murderer—Lord God, I have never stooped to trifles—

DANIEL: God have mercy on us, his prayer itself's a sin.
(*stones and flaming brands fly through the air. The windows are broken. The castle is set on fire*)

FRANZ: I cannot pray—here, here! (*beating his breast and forehead*)
All dry, all withered (*standing up*). No, nor will I pray—heaven shall not have this victory, hell will not make this mockery of me—

DANIEL: Mary and Jesus! help—save us—the whole castle is in flames!

FRANZ: Here, take this sword. Quickly. Thrust it into my ribs from behind, so that these villains cannot come and abuse me.
(*the fire gains ground*)

DANIEL: God forbid, God forbid! I don't want to send anyone to heaven before his time, still less to—(*he runs away*)

FRANZ (*staring wide-eyed after him. After a pause*): To hell, were you going to say? In truth, I can smell something like—(*in a frenzy*) Are those its twitterings? do I hear you hissing, serpents of the pit?—They are forcing their way up—attacking the doors—why am I so afraid of this sharp steel?—the doors give way—crash down—no way out.—Ha! you then, take pity on me! (*he tears the golden cord from his hat and strangles himself. Enter Schweitzer with his men*)

SCHWEITZER: Murdering scum, where are you?—Did you see how they ran?—has he so few friends? Where has he crept to, the vermin?

GRIMM (*coming upon the body*): Stop! what's this in the way? Bring a light here—

SCHWARZ: He's stolen a march on us. Put up your swords, here he is, laid out like a dead cat.

SCHWEITZER: Dead? What? dead? Without me, dead? It's a lie, I tell

you—see how quickly he will jump up!—(*shaking him*) Hey, you there! There's a father to be murdered.

GRIMM: Spare yourself the trouble. He's as dead as a rat.

SCHWEITZER (*leaving the body*): Yes! That's the end of him—he is as dead as a rat.—Go back and tell the captain: He is as dead as a rat—he will not see me again. (*shoots himself*)

Scene 2

The setting as in the last scene of the preceding act.

(Old Moor seated upon a stone—Robber Moor opposite him—Robbers scattered in the woods.)

ROBBER MOOR: He is not yet back? (*he strikes a stone with his dagger, making sparks*)

OLD MOOR: Forgiveness be his punishment—my vengeance redoubled love.

ROBBER MOOR: No, by the anger of my soul. It shall not be. I will not have it so. Such a deed of shame he shall drag behind him into eternity!—Why else should I have killed him?

OLD MOOR (*bursting into tears*): O my child!

ROBBER MOOR: What?—you weep for him? here by this dungeon?

OLD MOOR: Mercy! O have mercy! (*wringing his hands violently*)

At this moment—at this moment my child is judged!

ROBBER MOOR (*in fright*): Which?

OLD MOOR: Ah! what do you mean by that?

ROBBER MOOR: Nothing. Nothing.

OLD MOOR: Have you come to laugh in mockery at my grief?

ROBBER MOOR: Oh, my treacherous conscience!—Take no notice of what I say!

OLD MOOR: Yes, I had a son whom I tormented, and so a son must torment me in turn, it is the finger of God—O my Karl! my Karl! if you hover about me in the raiment of peace, forgive me! O forgive me!

ROBBER MOOR (*quickly*): He forgives you. (*checking himself*) If he is worthy to be called your son—he must forgive you.

OLD MOOR: Ah, he was too glorious for me—but I will go to meet

him with my tears, with my sleepless nights and my torturing dreams, I will embrace his knees and cry—will cry aloud: I have sinned in the sight of heaven and before you. I am not worthy to be called your father.

ROBBER MOOR (*deeply moved*): He was dear to you, your other son?

OLD MOOR: Heaven is my witness! Why did I let myself be deceived by the wiles of a wicked son? Praised as a father I went among the fathers of men. Fair about me blossomed my children full of promise. But—Oh, unhappy the hour!—the evil spirit entered into the heart of my youngest, I believed the serpent—lost my children, both of them. (*covering his face*)

ROBBER MOOR (*going away some distance from him*): Lost forever.

OLD MOOR: Oh, I feel it so deeply, what Amalia said, the spirit of vengeance spoke through her lips. In vain your dying hands you will stretch out to touch your son, in vain you will think you grasp the warm hand of your Karl, who will never come to stand at your bedside—

(*Robber Moor holds out his hand to him, with averted gaze*)

OLD MOOR: Would that this were my Karl's hand! But he lies far away in his narrow dwelling, is already sleeping his iron sleep, cannot hear the voice of my grief—woe to me! To die in the arms of a stranger—no son more—no son more to close my eyes—

ROBBER MOOR (*in the most violent agitation*): Now it must be—now—leave me (*to the Robbers*). And yet—can I give him back his son again?—I can no longer give him back his son—No! I will not do it.

OLD MOOR: What, my friend? What were you saying to yourself?

ROBBER MOOR: Your son—yes, old man—(*stammering*) your son—is—lost forever.

OLD MOOR: Forever?

ROBBER MOOR (*looking up to heaven in anguish*): O but this once—let not my soul be weakened—but this once sustain me!

OLD MOOR: Forever, you say?

ROBBER MOOR: Ask no more. Forever, I said.

OLD MOOR: Stranger! Stranger! Why did you drag me out of my dungeon?

ROBBER MOOR: And what then?—What if I were to snatch his blessing—snatch it like a thief, and creep away with that godlike prize—a father's blessing, they say, can never be lost.

OLD MOOR: And my Franz lost too?

ROBBER MOOR (*prostrating himself before him*): It was I who broke the locks of your dungeon—Give me your blessing.

OLD MOOR (*with grief*): That you had to destroy the son, to save the father!—See, the divinity is unwearying in its mercy, and we poor worms let the sun go down on our wrath. (*laying his hand on the Robber's head*) Be happy, according as you are merciful.

ROBBER MOOR (*standing up, tenderly*): Oh—where is my manhood? My sinews grow slack, the dagger slips from my hand.

OLD MOOR: How good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity, as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion*—Learn to deserve such bliss, young man, and the angels of heaven will bask in the glory that shines about you. Let your wisdom be the wisdom of gray hairs, but your heart—let your heart be the heart of an innocent child.

ROBBER MOOR: Oh, a foretaste of such bliss. Kiss me, godlike old man!

OLD MOOR (*kissing him*): Imagine that it is a father's kiss, and I will imagine I am kissing my son—can you also weep?

ROBBER MOOR: I thought it was a father's kiss!—Alas for me if they should bring him now!

(*Enter Schweitzer's companions in silent mourning procession, with lowered heads and faces covered*)

ROBBER MOOR: Heavens! (*drawing back anxiously, and trying to hide. The procession passes him. He looks away from them. Profound silence. They stop.*)

GRIMM (*in a subdued voice*): Captain!

(*Robber Moor does not answer, and draws further back*)

SCHWARZ: Beloved Captain!

(*Robber Moor draws still further back*)

GRIMM: We are innocent, Captain.

ROBBER MOOR (*without looking at them*): Who are you?

GRIMM: You will not look at us. We are your true and faithful band.

ROBBER MOOR: Woe to you if you have been true to me!

GRIMM: The last farewell of your trusty servant Schweitzer—he will come no more, your trusty servant Schweitzer.

*When brothers live together "it is like the dew of Hermon falling upon the hills of Zion. There the Lord bestows His blessing, life for evermore" (Psalms 133:3).

ROBBER MOOR (*springing to his feet*): Then you did not find him?
 SCHWARZ: Found him dead.

ROBBER MOOR (*leaping up with joy*): Thanks be to Thee, guider of all things.—Embrace me, my children—mercy is the password from now on—so, even that might be overcome—all, all overcome!

(*Enter more Robbers, and Amalia*)

ROBBERS: Hurrah, hurrah! A catch, a magnificent catch!

AMALIA (*with hair flowing free*): The dead, they cry, are resurrected at the sound of his voice—my uncle alive—in these woods—where is he? Karl! Uncle! Ah! (*rushing over to the old man*)

OLD MOOR: Amalia! My daughter! Amalia! (*holding her tightly in his arms*)

ROBBER MOOR (*starting back*): Who conjures up this vision before my eyes?

AMALIA (*tears herself away from the old man, runs to Karl and embraces him with rapture*): He is mine, O you stars! he is mine!

ROBBER MOOR (*tearing himself loose, to the Robbers*): Strike camp, all of you! The fiend has betrayed me!

AMALIA: Oh, my bridegroom, you are raving! Ah, for rapture! Why am I so unfeeling, in this whirl of joy so cold?

OLD MOOR (*drawing himself upright*): Bridegroom? Daughter! daughter! A bridegroom?

AMALIA: His forever! Mine forever and forever and forever!—O you heavenly powers, take from me this joy unto death, or I shall faint beneath its burden!

ROBBER MOOR: Tear her from my neck! Kill her! Kill him! me, yourselves! Everything! The whole world falls in ruins! (*trying to escape*)

AMALIA: Where are you going? what is it? Love, eternity! Rapture unending, and you would flee?

ROBBER MOOR: Away, away! Unhappiest of brides! See for yourself, ask for yourself and hear! Unhappiest of fathers! Let me flee this place forever!

AMALIA: Take me, in God's name, take me in your arms! It is as night before my eyes—He is running away!

ROBBER MOOR: Too late! In vain! Your curse, Father—ask me no more! I am, I have—your curse—your curse, as I thought!—Who lured me to this place? (*drawing his sword and rushing at the Robbers*) Which of you lured me to this place, you creatures of the

pit? Swoon then, Amalia!—Die, Father! Die through me a third time!—These your rescuers are robbers and murderers! Your Karl is their captain!

(Old Moor *expires*. Amalia is silent, and stands like a statue. The whole band pauses in silent horror)

ROBBER MOOR (*running against an oak tree*): The souls of those I strangled in the ecstasy of love—those I shattered in their blessed sleep—those—ha! Do you hear the powder magazine exploding over the beds of those women in labor? Do you see the flames licking at the cradles of their nurselings?—our nuptial torch, our wedding music—oh, he does not forget, he knows how to join the links—so, not for me the joy of love! so, for me love a torment! it is retribution!

AMALIA: It is true! Great Lord in heaven, it is true! What have I done, innocent lamb that I was! I loved him!

ROBBER MOOR: This is more than a man can bear. Have I not heard death whistling towards me from more than a thousand musket barrels, and without yielding a foot, and I am now to learn to quake like a woman? to quake before a woman?—No, no woman shall shake my manhood.—Blood! blood! It is only something caught from a woman—give me blood to swill, and it will pass. (*trying to escape*)

AMALIA (*falling into his arms*): Murderer! Devil! Angel—I cannot leave you.

ROBBER MOOR (*hurling her away from him*): Away, you serpent, you would mock a madman with your scorn, but I defy the tyrant destiny—what, you are weeping? Oh you wicked, wanton stars! She is pretending to weep, pretending there is a soul that weeps for me.

(Amalia throws her arms about his neck)

Ah, what is this? She does not spit at me, she does not thrust me from her—Amalia! Have you forgotten? do you know who it is you are embracing, Amalia?

AMALIA: My only one, I shall never leave you!

ROBBER MOOR (*in ecstatic joy*): She forgives me, she loves me! I am pure as the heavenly ether, she loves me! Tears of gratitude to you, merciful God in heaven! (*he falls on his knees, convulsed with weeping*) Peace has returned to my soul, the raging torment is past, hell is no more.—See, O see, the children of light weep upon the neck of the weeping devil—(*standing up, to the robbers*) Why

do you not weep too? weep, weep, for you are so blessed. Oh, Amalia! Amalia! Amalia! (*They kiss and remain in silent embrace*)

A ROBBER (*approaching angrily*): Stop, traitor!—Let go this arm straightway, or I shall tell you a word that will make your ears ring and your teeth chatter with horror! (*he parts them with his sword*)

AN OLD ROBBER: Remember the forests of Bohemia! Do you hear, do you hesitate—then remember the forests of Bohemia! Faithless man, where are your oaths? Do you forget wounds so quickly? When we risked fortune, honor and life itself for you? When we stood round you like ramparts, bore like shields the blows that were aimed at your life—did you not then raise your hand and swear an iron oath *never to forsake us*, as we had never forsaken you?—Have you no honor? have you no faith? will you abandon us for a whining whore?

A THIRD ROBBER: Shame on your perjury! the spirit of Roller that died for you, Roller whom you summoned from the dead to be your witness, will blush for your cowardice and rise armored from his grave to punish you.

THE ROBBERS (*all together, tearing open their clothes*): Look, look here! Do you recognize these scars? you belong to us! We bought you for our bondsman with our heart's blood, you belong to us, and if the archangel Michael should fight with Moloch for you!—march with us, one sacrifice for another! Amalia for the band!

ROBBER MOOR (*letting go of her hand*): It is finished!—I sought to mend my ways and turn again to my father, but heaven spoke, and said it should not be. (*coldly*) Fool, and why did I seek it? Can so great a sinner still mend his ways? So great a sinner cannot mend his ways, that I should have known long ago.—Be calm, I beg you, be calm! it is as it should be—when he sought me, I would not, now when I seek him he will not—what could be more just than that?—Do not roll your eyes like that—he has no need of me. Has he not creatures in abundance, he can so easily let one go, and that one am I. Come, comrades.

AMALIA (*dragging him back*): Stop, stop! One stroke, one fatal stroke! Forsaken anew! Draw your sword, and have pity on me!

ROBBER MOOR: Pity is flown to the wild beasts—I will not kill you!

AMALIA (*clasping his knees*): Oh, in the name of God, in the name of all mercies! I ask no more for love, I know that our stars above

flee one another in enmity—death is my only wish.—Forsaken, forsaken! Think of it in all its horror, forsaken! I cannot bear it. You can see, a woman cannot bear it. Death is my only wish! See, my hand is trembling! I have not the heart to strike. I am afraid of the flashing steel—for you it is so easy, you are a master in the art of slaughter, draw your sword, and I shall be happy!

ROBBER MOOR: Would you alone be happy? Away with you, I kill no woman.

AMALIA: Ah, assassin! you can only kill those who are happy, those who are tired of life you pass by. (*crawling to the robbers*) Then you must take pity on me, you hangman's apprentices!—There is such bloodthirsty pity in your looks, that is comfort for the wretched—your master is a vain fainthearted braggart.

ROBBER MOOR: Woman, what are you saying?

(*The robbers turn away from her*)

AMALIA: No friend? not a friend among these either? (*standing up*) Then let Dido* teach me to die!

(*She is going, one of the robbers takes aim*)

ROBBER MOOR: Stop! Would you dare—Moor's love shall die by Moor's hand alone! (*he kills her*)

ROBBERS: Captain, Captain! What have you done, are you mad?

ROBBER MOOR (*with gaze fixed on the body*): She is hit! This last convulsion, and it is over.—Now, see! what more can you demand? You sacrificed to me a life that you could no longer call your own, a life of horror and disgrace—I have slaughtered an angel for you. Look, look, I say! Are you satisfied now?

GRIMM: You have paid your debts with interest. You have done more than any man would do for his honor. And now come with us!

ROBBER MOOR: You say that? The life of a saint for the lives of rogues, it is an unequal bargain, is it not?—Oh, I tell you, if every one of you were to walk the scaffold and have your flesh torn from your bones, piece by piece with red-hot pincers, that your torments should last eleven summer days long, it would not make good these tears. (*with bitter laughter*) The scars, the forests of Bohemia! Yes, yes! of course, that had to be repaid.

SCHWARZ: Be calm, Captain! Come with us, this is no sight for you. Lead us on!

*Dido took her life to escape marriage to King Iarbas. In Virgil, this occurs after her lover Aeneas sails from Carthage.

ROBBER MOOR: Stop—one word before we go.—Listen, you all too zealous executioners of my barbaric command—from this moment I cease to be your captain.—With shame and loathing I lay down this bloodstained baton under whose sway you thought yourselves entitled to sin, and to affront the light of heaven with works of darkness.—Draw aside to left and right—we shall never make common cause in all eternity.

ROBBERS: Ha! have you lost your courage? Where are your high-flying plans? Were they but soap bubbles that burst at a woman's breath?

ROBBER MOOR: Oh, fool that I was, to suppose that I could make the world a fairer place through terror, and uphold the cause of justice through lawlessness. I called it revenge and right—I took it upon myself, O Providence, to smooth the jagged edges of your sword and make good your partiality—but—oh, childish vanity—here I stand at the limit of a life of horror, and see now with weeping and gnashing of teeth, that *two men such as I would destroy the whole moral order of creation*. Mercy—mercy for the youth who sought to anticipate Thy judgment—Thine alone is vengeance. Thou hast no need of man's hand. And now, truly, it is no longer in my power to make up for the past—what is ruined is ruined—what I have overthrown will never rise again. But still something remains that can reconcile me to the laws against which I have offended, and restore the order which I have violated. They must have a sacrifice—a sacrifice that will make manifest their invulnerable majesty to all mankind—and I myself shall be the victim. For them I must surely die.

ROBBERS: Take his sword from him—he is going to kill himself.

ROBBER MOOR: You fools! Damned to eternal blindness! Do you suppose a mortal sin can cancel out mortal sins, do you suppose the harmony of creation will be restored by such blasphemous discord? (*throwing his weapons contemptuously at their feet*) He shall have me alive. I shall go and give myself up into the hands of the law.

ROBBERS: Tie him up, chain him! He is raving mad.

ROBBER MOOR: Not that I doubt they would find me soon enough, if the powers above so will it. But they might surprise me in my sleep, or catch me as I fled, or surround me by force and with swords, and then I should have lost my one remaining merit, of dying for justice of my own free will. Why should I still seek like a

common thief to keep hidden a life that in the eyes of heaven has long been forfeit?

ROBBERS: Let him go! These are fantasies of greatness. He will stake his life on empty admiration.

ROBBER MOOR: I might be admired for it. (*after some reflection*) I remember speaking to a poor wretch as I came here—a wage earner with eleven children—they are offering a thousand—louis d'or reward for handing over the great robber alive—I can help that man. (*exit*)

Translated by F. J. Lamport